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AASP-Certified Consultants' Experiences of Spirituality within Sport Psychology Consultation

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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Trevor Jonas Egli entitled "AASP-Certified Consultants' Experiences of Spirituality within Sport Psychology Consultation." I have examined the final electronic copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Kinesiology and Sport Studies.

Leslee A. Fisher, Major Professor

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Accepted for the Council:

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(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

AASP-Certified Consultants' Experiences of Spirituality within Sport Psychology Consultation

A Dissertation

Presented for the

Doctor of Philosophy

Degree

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Trevor Jonas Egli

May 2013

DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my best friend and wife, Meagan Brooke Egli.

I choose you forever.

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I would not be here without the help of many amazing people. First, I would like to thank my committee members for your willingness to travel with me on this dissertation journey. Dr. Fisher, I do not know where I would be if I would have never had a simple conversation with you in Salt Lake City, UT. Thank you for pushing me, challenging me, and caring about me. Dr. Waller, thank you for your words of encouragement, prayers, and willingness to allow me to plunder your bookshelves throughout this process. Dr. Dzikus, thank you for always having a smile on your face and offering insight into my topic only you can provide. Dr. Hatch, thank you for going against your better judgement, accepting an invitation to be a part of my committee, and offering your time, efforts, and expertise. All of you have made me a better writer, researcher, and person in your own unique way. It was my privilege to work with each of you.

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Meagan Brooke Egli. You truly have been with me throughout this entire process in every way and you have sacrified so much for me. We were just married, I was starting a Ph.D. program, and we did not know many people or anything about the area. Yet, I can say that we are stronger than ever. Colossians 1:17. Thank you for always being my cheerleader, my comedian, my workout partner, my love, my hero, and my best friend. You have earned yourself an honorary, imaginary, Ph.D.!

Lastly, I acknowledge that this project was never about me. It was never about me making a name for myself or becoming well-known, but about trying to be obedient to where I have felt called. Success, for me, is understood beautifully by the author of the book *Man's Search for Meaning* (1984), Victor E. Frankl.

> Don't aim at success – the more you aim at it and make it a target, the more you are going to miss it. For success, like happiness, cannot be pursued; it must ensue, and it only does so as the unintended side-effect of one's personal dedication to a cause greater than oneself or as the byproduct of one's surrender to a person other than oneself. (pp. 16-17)

This cause greater than myself is that I honor God in all that I do. "However, I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me – the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace" (Acts 20:24).

Abstract

According to Watson and Nesti (2005), the scholarly investigation of spirituality within sport psychology is lacking. Recently, within cultural sport psychology (Schinke & Hanrahan, 2009), a discussion of spirituality has been initiated; however, it has not received the same amount of attention as other aspects of culture that impact sport performance and mental well-being (Butryn, 2002, 2010; Duda & Allison, 1990; Kontos & Breland-Noble, 2002; Krane, Waldron, Kauer & Semerjian, 2010; McGannon & Busanich, 2010). Therefore, the purpose of this study was to understand how AASP-certified (CC-AASP) consultants understand spirituality. Nine AASP-certified (CC-AASP) consultants who have encountered spirituality in their practice were interviewed. A semi-structured interview guide was developed using a modified version of Fisher's (1993) Social Self-Identity Interview. Bogdan and Biklen's (2007) data analysis was also used to identify metaphors and major themes found in the transcribed interviews. Results suggest that one major metaphor, *The Consulting Relationship as Building a House*, as well as four major themes of spirituality as (a) *A Portal*; (b) *Athlete-Driven*; (c) *A Coping Mechanism*; and (d) *Christianity as the Norm* emerged from the data. While consultants appeared to have difficulty defining spirituality, of import was building relationships with athletes similar to building a "house". Trust began by digging a solid "foundation" and having doors and windows representing "portals" into athletes' use of spirituality. For these consultants, athletes always initiated the topic of spirituality within consultation. Consultants felt that athletes used spirituality in their performance mostly as a coping mechanism when facing adversity. Christianity was the norm in terms of athlete-reported usage in performance. Two consultants used spirituality to ground their own practice. Spiritual identity development models (e.g.,

Watson & Nesti, 2005) and cultural sport psychology practice models (e.g., Fisher, Roper, &

Butryn, 2009) are linked to the discussion. Suggestions are also given for how to engage sport

psychology graduate students in this conversation during their training.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

"Why would you do that?" "Tim Tebow doesn't even play that sport." "Where are you going with this?" "Are you sure this isn't your own bias?" These are all questions and comments I received from peers after watching what I felt was a successful sport psychology consulting session with a professed Christian athlete during my masters degree training. After working with this athlete for several sessions, I felt like we were not moving anywhere productive; this led me to ask, "What is it that you enjoy about what we have done together?" The athlete's response changed my approach to working with her for the rest of our time. She said, "I loved it when you included the Bible verses." From then on, we included Christianity in our discussions, reflecting on a Bible verse each session. The athlete thought this made our time together very effective.

Personally, my Christian faith impacts my entire being, and it has always been the lens through which I have approached sport, to the best of my ability. Because of this, I was always extremely sensitive about bringing this topic up in most relationships, especially in a sport psychology consulting relationship. However, this athlete helped me to see that it can be appropriate and even freeing, at times, to do so.

Reflecting back on this experience, I can say that I am thankful for my peers' tough and rational questions. There is one conversation with a colleague I had immediately following this meeting that stands out to me. He told me that he thought I was not treated fairly by our peers, even though he did not ascribe to the Christian faith. Although it was nice to hear such a comment, his questions that followed are what I have held onto that continues to challenge and

encourage me. He said, "What if that had been me? What if I was the one working with that athlete? What would I have done?" Because of his questions, in this dissertation, I used qualitative methodology – specifically, semi-structured interviewing – to examine how AASP-certified consultants deal with spirituality within sport psychology consulting. In this paper, I briefly describe literature related to spirituality, faith and sport as well as how these constructs have been examined within applied sport psychology. Next, I state the problem, purpose, guiding questions, limitations, delimitations and definitions used in this research.

Brief Literature Review

Culture is a term that has many operational definitions in the literature. In its simplest form, Schinke and Hanrahan (2009) state that it is the total way of life for a group of people. This can include geographic location, race, ethnicity, religion and spirituality, knowledge, architecture, language, morals, customs; in addition, culture is constantly changing and evolving (Blodgett, Yungblut, Schinke, & Hanrahan, 2009; Pedersen, Draguns, Lonner, & Trimble, 2008). Although each aspect of culture is important, in this study, I focused on religion and spirituality. Koenig (2008) described religion as a "system of beliefs and practices observed by a community, supported by rituals that acknowledge, worship, communicate with, or approach the Sacred, the Divine, God (in Western cultures), or Ultimate Truth, Reality, or nirvana (in Eastern cultures)" (p. 11). Religion may be placed into one of two categories. The first is organizational religiosity (sometimes referred to as "organized religion"), which is an activity that may be public, social, and institutional and often involves religious services. Non-organizational religiosity is considered more personal, private, and individual compared to organizational religiousity. Religious practices such as prayer or meditation and reading scripture are typically done in

private by oneself (Koenig, 2008). The previous definitions refer to more "traditional"

understanding of religion. Koenig (2008) suggests yet another way to understand religion

through non-traditional forms such as "astrology, divination, witchcraft, invoking of spirits,

spiritism, and a variety of indigenous, folk, or animistic rituals and practices related to the

supernatural" (Koenig, 2008, p. 12).

Spirituality Models

According to Robinson (2007), spirituality is also a phenomenon that has a multitude of

meanings. In Western culture, spirituality through the Christian religion has been the dominant

form and often refers to the Christian narrative. How people understood spirituality in the U.S.

was challenged in the 1960s with New Age spirituality, which led to many people moving away

from patriarchial institutions and authorities (Robinson, 2007). This was initiated by postmodern

theory, which insists that there is no one objective reality or truth with a capital "T". The root of

this definition of spirituality is "spirit," from the Latin word *spiritus*, meaning breath, wind, and

life principle (Robinson, 2007). Therefore, according to Robinson (2007), "…spirituality is about

the practice and outworking of the spirit and the ways which it is developed, with its different

aspects and relationships connected, sustained and understood" (p. 24).

Robinson's (2007) conceptualization of spirituality contains a model with three parts. The

first is an awareness of the other, which includes the self, groups, interpersonal relationships, the

environment, and a Deity (or deities). Spirituality is relational. Another aspect is responding to

the other. This refers to the spiritual practices one does in lieu of one's own personal belief of

one's spirituality. The last component of the model is developing meaning. This entails how one

searches for and finds meaning and value. It may include one's purposes, hopes, and resolutions

that can be found in experience. Thus, religion is only one expression of spirituality (Robinson, 2007).

In contrast, Anandarajah and Hight (2001) suggest that spirituality may be defined as "a complex and multidimensional part of the human experience. It has cognitive, experiential, and behavior aspects" (p. 83). Cognitive aspects refer to finding meaning and purpose in life. The experiential aspects entail the positive emotional feelings that come from one's spiritual journey, while the behavioral aspects involved how one reflects his/her spiritual beliefs outwardly. This understanding of spirituality assumes that spirituality is not simply limited to religion, but wherever one places his/her values and principles. For example, Christianity, Buddhism, nature, music, and sport may all be mediums through which spirituality is found.

It appears then, that spirituality has been defined as involving meaning and purpose, relationship, and action. Spirituality has also been discussed by scholars who work in performance enhancement. In their book *The Power of Full Engagement*, Loehr and Schwartz (2003) describe spirituality as "spiritual energy." They define it as "the connection to a deeply held set of values and to a purpose beyond our self-interest" (p. 110). In discussing the necessary energies that one must seek to balance within one's life – physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual – they suggest that spiritual energy is most vital to overall well-being and performance. Although there is a dearth of research on spirituality in the field of sport psychology, there are also other scholars who discuss the phenomenon.

Faith Models

According to Fowler (1981), "Faith is inexhaustibly mysterious" (p. xiii). When scholars attempt to define and operationalize the term "faith", they often find that the "mysterious"

quality makes it difficult. However, such a conceptualization is necessary so that there is clarity for readers; faith often appears ambiguous, and, much like spirituality it contains different meanings for different people. According to Dykstra (2005), any discussion of faith can be understood from one of two paradigms. The first paradigm views faith as a general human phenomenon, while the second views faith in relation to a divine being or God. In thinking about faith as a general human phenomenon, Dykstra (2005) stated:

> Faith, in this view, is constituted by basic human activities, and accordingly, faith is a dimension of every human life, because belief, trust, and confidence in something seem inherent to being human. Some people place their faith in material goods or personal prestige; some in certain people, communities or traditions; others in ideas or goals; still others in a transcendent Reality or Being. But everyone, from this perspective, has some form of faith. (p. 17)

One can see that from this view that religion may or may not be the object of one's faith. Fowler (1981) is another scholar who promotes this understanding as the foundation for his development of faith model. In Fowler's (1981) original stages of faith theory, he expands upon this idea when he states:

> Faith is not always religious in its content or context. To ask these questions seriously of oneself or others does not necessarily mean to elicit answers about religious commitment or beliefs. Faith is a person's or group's way of moving into the force field of life. It is our way of finding coherence in and giving meaning to the multiple forces and relations that make up our lives. Faith is a person's way of seeing him/herself in relation to others against a background of shared meaning and purpose. (p. 4)

Fowler's (1981) stages of faith model has received the most attention through both research and application. Fowler's foundational work has generated further research on faith development (Heywood, 2008). Fowler's (1981) model is made up of seven stages that are hierarchical and follow an ordered progression; there is also a beginning and an end. However, not all scholars have accepted Fowler's (1981) model and have sought alternatives including Dykstra (1986), Streib (2001, 2005), and Heywood (2008). Others have argued that Fowler's (1981) epistemic orientation does not allow his model to address the issue of postmodernism. For example, McDargh (2001) stated that the "postmodern problem of foundations, or whether it is possible to speak meaningfully of a universal human religious orientation or potentiality" (p. 185) is not addressed appropriately through Fowler's (1981) work.

The second understanding of faith is distinguished from the first in that faith is only relevant in relation to God. Here, Dykstra (2005) discusses it in this perspective:

Faith involves being related to God in a particular way, indeed, being in right relationship to a true God. Ultimate relationship to anyone or anything other than God is considered to be idolatry, not faith…thus, faith is primarily a response to a gift, an activity of recognizing and accepting God's grace, which gives rise to a way of life – a way of believing, trusting, committing, and orienting all one's thoughts and actions. (pp. 17-18)

This is especially true in relation to the Christian religion, and, more specifically, trust in God through Jesus Christ. Here, faith is understood only from within this context. In the New Testament canon in the Christian Bible book of Hebrews, the writer states, "Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance for what we do not see" (Hebrews 11:1, NIV). This particular understanding of faith is relevant to the work of Westerhoff III (1976) and

Dykstra (1986). The two paradigms just reviewed (e.g., Fowler's and Dykstra's) provide a groundwork upon which scholars have examined and discussed faith development theory. However, at this point in time, there is not one universally accepted model of faith development.

Spirituality, Religion and Sport

Finding meaning and purpose in one's life is a task that could be argued is relevant for everyone. Living life with a sense of purpose, values, or commitment may not necessarily be a conscious thought, however; as Fowler (1981) suggests, understanding faith as a human universal means that each person is committed to something – an idea, way of life, material item, higher power – that ultimately drives his/her sense of being. Reflecting on the previous discussion of faith development, spirituality and religion, one may not initially think of sport as a place to reflect on faith. Yet, sport is a place in which many people place their faith. Therefore, we should be aware of how spirituality and religion intersect with sport.

Referring to performance excellence in sport, Ken Ravizza (2002) suggests that "…when physical, mental, and emotional components join together movement takes on a spiritual dimension in the sense of purpose that is attained" (p. 14). This represents the multidimensionality of the phenomenon of spirituality and the connection with what Ravizza describes as a "greater whole" (p. 14). Another definiton of spirituality in sport includes "…an athlete's close relationships, or extraordinary and self-affirming moments in life such as winning an Olympic medal, or securing a personal best" (Watson & Nesti, p. 229). These theorists accept spirituality as being defined as however an individual decides to do so, and religion may or may not be included. Regardless, as Koenig (2008) discussed his overview of various definitions of spirituality, any definition of spirituality one chooses for oneself is positive in nature. In other

words, spirituality is a phenomenon some people would like to have in their lives, and, perhaps by extension, also in sport.

Although spirituality, religion, and sport are relevant in our society today, they are not always intertwined as they once were in our past (Mandelbaum, 2004). The Olympics in 776 B.C.E., the ancient cultures of the Central American Mayans and Aztecs, and native North Americans are all examples of cultures that blended religion and sport (Baker, 2007; Guttmann, 1992). However, sport has now become more secular in nature and is being used more for entertainment purposes (Roberts & Yamane, 2012). Despite the growing disconnect of religion from American culture, this has not stopped religious and/or spiritual athletes and coaches from participating in sport (Hoffman, 2010; Magdalinski & Chandler, 2002). This being the case, it would then be beneficial for helping professionals, specifically sport psychology consultants, to better understand religious and/or spiritual sport participants.

Spirituality, Religion, and Sport Psychology Research

Sport psychology research regarding the use of religion in sport has focused on Christian athletes' experiences within sport (Stevenson, 1997, 1991), a Christian coach's experience of sport (Bennett, Sagas, Fleming, & Von Roenn, 2005), the use of prayer by Division I athletes (Czech, Wrisberg, Fisher, Thompson, & Hayes, 2004) and by Division I coaches (Egli, Czech, Shaver, Todd, & Gentner, in review). Watson and Nesti (2005) have also attempted to bring the discussion of spirituality into sport psychology. More specifically, they describe how spirituality may be understood within the context of sport, how it may be involved in mental skills training and a counseling relationship, as well as in relation to the "flow" experience (Czikszentmihalyi, 1975; Watson & Nesti, 2005).

Recently, the discussion of spirituality has found itself within cultural sport psychology (Schinke & Hanrahan, 2009). Cultural sport psychology places primary importance on seeing "culture" as an integral part of being able to understand oneself and others. Schinke and Hanrahan (2009) as well as others suggest that this means practitioners need to be aware of how their own as well as athletes' race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, geographic location, religion and spirituality impact their sport experience (Fisher, Butryn, & Roper, 2005; Fisher, Butryn, & Roper, 2003; Fisher, Roper, & Butryn, 2009; Ryba, 2009; Schinke, Hanrahan, & Catina, 2009). The Association for Applied Sport Psychology (AASP) includes statements about cultural competency within their ethical guidelines (Watson, Etzel, & Loughran, 2012). Cultural competency is addressed by professionals in the field (see Gill & Kampoff, 2010; Kontos & Breland-Noble, 2002, for example). However, there is still a lack of research related to cultural competence within sport psychology (Schinke & Hanrahan, 2009). In addition, while some scholars have addressed specific aspects of culture within sport psychology research such as race (Butryn, 2002, 2010; Duda & Allison, 1990; Kontos & Breland-Noble, 2002), sexual orientation (Krane, Waldron, Kauer & Semerjian, 2010), and gender (McGannon & Busanich, 2010), spirituality has yet to receive the same amount of attention.

Statement of the Problem

Spirituality within sport psychology consulting has received very little scholarly attention (Watson & Nesti, 2005). More recently, a discussion of spirituality has been initiated within cultural sport psychology (Schinke & Hanrahan, 2009); however, it fails to address spirituality in any depth. Thus, there is a derth of knowledge as to how sport psychology consultants

understand spirituality or how they may experience this phenomenon within a performance consulting relationship.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to understand how experienced AASP-certified sport psychology consultants (CC-AASP) understand spirituality, and, more specifically, how they address issues of spirituality within their consulting relationships.

Guiding Research Questions

1. How do experienced CC-AASPs understand and define spirituality and faith?

2. In what ways does spirituality enter into their sport psychology consulting relationships?

Limitations

1. Purposeful sampling was used to identify the participants.

2. Participants only represent sport psychology consultants who have encountered spirituality within a performance consulting relationship.

3. Participants only represent sport psychology consultants who have been AASP-certified (CC-AASP).

4. Participants were current AASP members who attended the 2012 Annual conference in Atlanta, Georgia, October 3-7th.

5. The student researcher is a professed Christian who has utilized spirituality and religion within performance consulting relationships.

Delimitations

1. Eight interviews were conducted at the 2012 Annual Association for Applied Sport Psychology conference between October 2 and October 7th

2. One interview took place on October 8th outside of conference.

3. The sample size was 9 participants.

Definitions

Culture – "a complex whole that includes knowledge, beliefs, art, architecture, language, morals, laws, customs, and other capabilities and habits acquired by members of a society" (Vontress, 2008, p. vii); "a set of human-made objective and subjective elements that in the past increased the probability of survival" (Schinke et al., 2009, p. 5).

Cultural competence - "the ability to counsel people of different backgrounds in a meaningful and ameliorative way" (Kontos & Breland-Noble, 2002, p. 297).

Cultural sport psychology – "The intersection of sport psychology and culture" (Schinke et al., 2009, p. 3).

Faith – "a person's or group's way of moving into the force field of life. It is our way of finding coherence in and giving meaning to the multiple forces and relations that make up our lives. Faith is a person's way of seeing him/herself in relation to others against a background of shared meaning and purpose" (Fowler, 1981, p. 4).

Postmodernism – Theoretical orientation that "questions the notion that any one particular method, theory, discourse, or worldview is the right way to know about people. Truth and knowledge claims about people serve particular interests that are located in local, cultural, and political struggles" (McGannon & Johnson, 2009, p. 58).

Religion - "system of beliefs and practices observed by a community, supported by rituals that acknowledge, worship, communicate with, or approach the Sacred, the Divine, God (in Western cultures), or Ultimate Truth, Reality, or nirvana (in Eastern cultures)" (Koenig, 2008, p. 11).

<u>Spirituality</u> – "a complex and multidimensional part of the human experience. It has cognitive, experiential, and behavior aspects" (Anandarajah & Hight, 2001, p. 83).

   Chapter two expands upon the information found within this chapter. An extended literature review is presented.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

Any helping profession entails interacting with a variety of groups of people. Some will be similar in race, background, socioeconomic status, gender, and spirituality, which often is a place of comfort due to similarity; however, not only should one be prepared to work with people similar to oneself, but also with a diverse crowd. This is especially true in the field of sport psychology. Thus, cultural sport psychology has been developed in order to help educate the field on how to understand and approach various aspects of culture (Schinke & Hanrahan, 2009). However, one such aspect of culture that has not received much attention is spirituality (Watson & Nesti, 2005). Therefore, this paper first discusses concepts within cultural sport psychology, specifically spirituality. It then provides definitions of terms relevant to spirituality, such as faith and religion, appropriate models and connection to sport psychology, and a history of sport and religion through the example of Christianity.

Culture

As a Caucasian Eurocentric dominated field, it is vital for consultants and educators to integrate multicultural training in order to provide the most effective services for all populations (Butryn, 2002). Cultural competence is a term that does not have a single consensus definition (Pèrez & Luquis, 2008) and may be used interchangeably with multicultural competence (Gill & Kampoff, 2010). In this study, I focus on a definition used within sport psychology literature using the term *cultural competence* over multicultural competence. Kontos and Breland-Noble (2002) defined cultural competence as "the ability to counsel people of different backgrounds in a meaningful and ameliorative way" (p. 297). In a similar vein, Gill and Kampoff (2010) said it

is "the ability to work effectively with individuals who are of a different culture" (p. 68). For one to make appropriate strides in becoming more culturally competent, one should begin to comprehend what culture is and the various constructs that it may entail.

Culture, like cultural competence, is a term that has many definitions. In its most simple form one may describe it as the total way of life for a group of people. This can include geographic location, race, ethnicity, religion, knowledge, architecture, language, morals, customs; it is also constantly changing and evolving (Blodgett, Yungblut, Schinke, & Hanrahan, 2009; Pedersen, Draguns, Lonner, & Trimble, 2008). Geographic location entails when a particular culture group is prevalent in a specific region (e.g., large population of Chinese athletes in Singapore) (Schinke, Hanrahan, & Catina, 2009). Race "identifies biological attributes such as skin color, facial features, or hair texture" (Blodgett et al., 2009, p. 91). An example of this would be how Japanese might be identified by the shape of their eyes (Blodgett et al., 2009). Butryn (2002) recognizes race as "a socio-historical construct and should therefore be considered an unstable conglomeration of social meanings that are constantly being changed through political action" (p. 317). Duda and Allison (1990) state that race is not always a condition for "ethnic group membership" by itself, as ethnicity refers to "perceived membership and/or sense of belonging to a group that is self-ascribed and/or ascribed by others" (p. 115). An example would be Pacific Islanders in Australia who share common traditions and a "shared sense of identity" (Blodgett et al., 2009, p. 91). Religion may be understood as a "system of beliefs and practices observed by a community, supported by rituals that acknowledge, worship, communicate with, or approach the Sacred, the Divine, God (in Western cultures), or Ultimate Truth, Reality, or nirvana (in Eastern cultures)" (Koenig, 2008, p. 11). In North America, the

monotheistic religion of Christianity is the dominant narrative, and includes the practice of

prayer, reflecting on the Bible, and attending Church services (Blodgett et al., 2009). One's

culture often leads to the way by which one views the world around them to describe reality,

which is known as one's worldview (Koltko-Rivera, 2004). If one does not consider an athlete's

culture and worldview from the beginning, it may lead to ineffective services and inappropriate

interventions that could potentially harm the athlete's performance as well as create some ethical

dilemmas (Schinke et al., 2009).

In addition to the make up of culture discussed above, Schinke, Hanrahan, and Catina

(2009) expanded upon additional cultural considerations that can influence one's sport

psychology consulting relationships. Culture entails norms, values, beliefs, and behaviors, which

means that athletes and coaches with whom one works have patterns, customs and truths specific

to them. This could come in the form of how one understands personal space and time. For

example, personal space tends to be a greater distance away in mainstream North American

culture, whereas it may be less in Latin American countries (Schinke et al., 2009). Regarding

time, Western mainstream adheres to a clock-based time system, which often entails maintaining

to a specific schedule, yet other scholars have found that "being on time" may not be as

important in other cultures (Hanrahan, 2005, Terry, 2009).

Sport psychology consultants should also consider the athlete's level of acculturation

(Schinke et al., 2009). This refers to how one changes and adapts into another culture in which

one is in contact (Ward, 2008). How one learns to become part of one's own culture is known as

enculturalization (Ho, 1995). Knowing where on the spectrum of acculturation and enculturation

an athlete lies is information that will allow a sport psychology consultant to cater to the athlete's

needs (Kontos & Breland-Noble, 2002). For example, if an American SPC is working with an international collegiate student-athlete from Mexico, being aware of how the student-athlete maintains his/her own culture and how he/she adapts to American culture could help one's approach. Sport psychology consultants should also recognize whether one comes from an individualistic or collectivistic culture, as it places either the self or others in the forefront of any decision (Schinke et al., 2009). Individualistic societies, such as the United States and Canada "foster a unique sense of self and autonomy," whereas collectivistic societies favor the desire of the group and emphasize cooperation and cohesion (Shinke et al., 2009, p. 7). Examples of collectivistic cultures include China and Japan. Other differences between cultures could be goal-directed behavior and issues of masculinity and femininity (Blodgett et al., 2009). Goal-directed behavior examines motivations behind participation, such as whether one may be more process or outcome oriented. Regarding potential issues involving masculinity and femininity could be found in traditional views of gender in Korean and Latin American culture, as males within those cultures may not be as accepting of female athletes and/or female sport psychology consultants (Blodgett et al., 2009). Although this paper does not discuss how the factors above influence specific cultures (i.e., Asian Americans, African Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, Middle-Eastern, etc.), it is important to gain understanding of different cultural groups and how they view various helping professions, specifically sport psychology practitioners. There are multiple textbooks and articles in which one may find such useful information (Kontos & Arguello, 2005; Kontos & Breland-Noble, 2002; Pedersen et al., 2008; Schinke & Hanrahan, 2009).

When one becomes aware of the information above, it will begin the process of becoming culturally competent, which, as stated previously, is understood as being able to consult and interact with others from various cultures (Kontos & Breland-Noble, 2002). Cultural awareness is necessary for sport psychology consultants to recognize; however, one must go beyond just awareness and also become more culturally knowledgeable and develop the appropriate multicultural counseling skills and strategies to move towards becoming culturally competent (Gill & Kampoff, 2010). It is important to include all three aspects and have a healthy balance within one's training, as an overemphasis on just one of these steps may lead to an inadequate perspective of becoming competent (Pedersen, 2008). Cross-cultural counseling literature also emphasizes the importance of such steps so one may avoid becoming culturally encapsulated. Both Wrenn (1962) and Pedersen (2000) discuss cultural encapsulation in length, which is when one uses his/her own worldview or perspective of the world when working with a client. Although this stems from counseling, it is extremely relevant to cultural sport psychology.

Recently, scholars within the field of sport psychology have developed a movement called cultural sport psychology (Schinke & Hanrahan, 2009). This places "culture" as an integral part of being able to understand oneself and others, which means being aware of one's race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, geographic location, religion and spirituality as part of one's culture (Ryba, 2009; Schinke, Hanrahan, & Catina, 2009). Although strides have been taken to address culture within sport psychology, it is a field that has failed to make diversity a meaningful issue, which has been expressed by members of the Association for Applied Sport Psychology (Fisher & Roper, in press).

Shinke et al. (2009) have discussed multiple consequences that could occur if one ignores cultural sport psychology. One consequence is that a sport psychology consultant could misinterpret cultural norms of the athlete or coach with whom one is working, which could lead to attrition of athletes from that culture seeking your services and/or early termination of the consulting relationship. An example of this might be having different expectations for the sport psychology relationship, which could simply be the structure of time. If an Indian athlete does not arrive "on time" for a meeting with an American sport psychology consultant, the consultant may interpret this as a lack of commitment when this may not be the case within the athlete's culture (Terry, 2009). These situations could ultimately lead to an athlete or coach to question the credibility of the services being provided by the sport psychology consultant. Schinke et al. (2009) also state that if a consultant treats everyone the same and ignores cultural differences, such as race, one may be described as "color blind." In doing so, one is often unaware of power relations and privilege that come with various aspects of culture (Gill & Kampoff, 2010). Therefore, if sport psychology consultants take the appropriate steps in moving towards cultural competence and accepting cultural sport psychology, they "must be inclusive of *all* individuals" and will be better equipped to work with athletes and coaches from different cultures (Gill & Kampoff, 2010, p. 69). To address such cultural issues, various theoretical models have been offered as a way to "do" and conceptualize cultural sport psychology.

Cultural Sport Psychology Models

Cultural aspects have yet to receive much attention in traditional sport psychology (Schinke & Hanrahan, 2009), and therefore, have lacked theoretical models that may help researchers and practitioners include culture within their work. However, despite a perceived

lack of importance of diversity and culture within sport psychology, specifically within the

Association for Applied Sport Psychology (AASP) (Fisher & Roper, in press), there are scholars

who have offered frameworks that are conducive to the inclusion of culture (Fisher, Butryn, &

Roper, 2003, Fisher, Butryn, & Roper, 2005, Fisher, Roper, & Butryn, 2009, Gill & Kampoff,

2009, 2010, Ryba & Wright, 2005). Two predominant models include a cultural studies approach

(Fisher et al., 2003, Ryba & Wright, 2005) and a multicultural psychology approach (Gill &

Kampoff, 2009).

Fisher, Butryn, and Roper (2003), have brought to light the importance of concepts, such

as power, privilege, and praxis (Fisher, Butryn, & Roper, 2005; Fisher, Roper & Butryn, 2009;

Ryba & Wright, 2005). Power may be understood as being either structural or cultural. Structural

refers to ones social status, whereas "cultural power is described as relational rather than

hierarchical" (Fisher et al., 2003, p. 395). Privilege represents some form of favor or power.

Lastly, praxis is "the integration of theory, research, and practice" (Fisher et al., 2003, p. 397).

Being aware of such ideas has led to the critique of dominant sport psychology practices, an

increased awareness of how one views athletes, as well as themselves within the context of sport,

interdisciplinary approaches, and encouraging social justice projects (Fisher et al., 2005, 2009;

Ryba et Wright, 2005),

In practicing a cultural studies model, Ryba and Wright (2005) spoke of the emerging

model. The components of this model included "cultural studies, service learning and social

justice, and qualitative research" (p. 203). Thus, when used within sport psychology it

acknowledges the use of multiple discourses and sees performance enhancement as a tool for

empowerment for athletes. Fisher et al. (2005) also encouraged practical applications towards

praxis and social justice. The authors included a list of various groups/programs that sport psychology practitioners may enter into in order to promote social justice and be examples to student-athletes. Overall, a cultural studies approach assumes interdisciplinary work is necessary, accepts qualitative research, and attempts to heighten the awareness of sociocultural differences.

A second framework one may approach culture is the multicultural psychology framework (Gill & Kampoff , 2010). This is very similar to the cultural studies method; however, rather than offer an interdisciplinary approach, it stays within the discipline of psychology. Gill and Kampoff (2010) suggest three themes for their approach. The first is that individuals have multiple, intersecting cultural identities. This takes into account all aspects of a person, such as race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, spirituality, as well as others. They also view sport in terms of who has the power and privilege, and believe in advocating for social justice. These three themes can all be seen within the cultural studies model.

Overall, one can see that culture is relevant to all individuals. It is also is made up of multiple components with which consultants should become more aware and integrate within their practice. However, one specific aspect of culture that has not received much attention is spirituality. One term associated with spirituality is faith.

Faith

"Faith is inexhaustibly mysterious" (Fowler, 1981, p. xiii). If one attempts to define and operationalize the term "faith" one may find it hard to disagree with this statement by James Fowler. However, such a task to conceptualize faith must be done to provide a sense of clarity for readers, as it is often ambiguous and has different meanings for different people. A

discussion of how one might define faith is presented and is followed by a discussion of faith development theory and how it applies to the field of sport psychology.

The discussion of faith can be understood from one of two paradigms (Dykstra, 2005). The first is faith as a general human phenomenon, while the second is that faith must be in relation to God or a divine being. In thinking of faith as a general human phenomenon, Dykstra (2005) says the following:

> Faith, in this view, is constituted by basic human activities, and accordingly, faith is a dimension of every human life, because belief, trust, and confidence in something seem inherent to being human. Some people place their faith in material goods or personal prestige; some in certain people, communities or traditions; others in ideas or goals; still others in a transcendent Reality or Being. But everyone, from this perspective, has some form of faith. (p. 17)

Although the term faith is often understood within the context of religion, one can see that from this view it may or may not be the object of one's faith. One such scholar to use this as a basis of his understanding for his work on the development of faith is James Fowler (1981). In Fowler's (1981) original stages of faith theory, he expands upon this idea:

> Faith is not always religious in its content or context. To ask these questions seriously of oneself or others does not necessarily mean to elicit answers about religious commitment or beliefs. Faith is a person's or group's way of moving into the force field of life. It is our way of finding coherence in and giving meaning to the multiple forces and relations that make up our lives. Faith is a person's way of seeing him/herself in relation to others against a background of shared meaning and purpose. (p. 4)

The second understanding of the term faith distinguishes itself from the first in that faith is only relevant in relation to God. Here Dykstra (2005) discusses it in this perspective:

> Faith involves being related to God in a particular way, indeed, being in right relationship to a true God. Ultimate relationship to anyone or anything other than God is considered to be idolatry, not faith…thus, faith is primarily a response to a gift, an activity of recognizing and accepting God's grace, which gives rise to a way of life – a way of believing, trusting, committing, and orienting all one's thoughts and actions. (pp. 17-18)

This is especially true in relation to the Christian religion, specifically trust in God through Jesus Christ. Here, faith is understood only from within this context. In the book of Hebrews, which is found in the New Testament canon in the Christian Bible, it discusses faith. For example, the writer states, "Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance for what we do not see" (Hebrews 11:1, NIV). This particular understanding of faith will be relevant when the work of Craig Dykstra is discussed. These two paradigms provide a groundwork for which scholars have examined and discussed faith development theory. Faith is a dynamic phenomenon in which describing how it grows or develops can become quite difficult.

Faith Development Theories

One of the first scholars to begin to empirically study faith development was James Fowler, and his work has and continues to be a framework in which growth, or in Fowler's case, development of faith is examined. Therefore, it is imperative to begin this discussion of faith development theory with Fowler's (1981) stages of faith model. As previously noted, Fowler understands faith as being a universal human phenomenon, and extends beyond the confines of religion. This understanding stems from his dissertation work on the theological ethics of H.

Richard Niebuhr. He later became fascinated with the works of Erik Erikson (1963), Lawrence

Kohlberg (1976), and Jean Piaget (1962) and their developmental models; however, he held on

tightly to Erikson (1963) and Niebuhr's multidimensional theology through the development of

his own stage model.

In his book *Stages of Change* (1981), prior to describing his stages of change model he

offers his own understanding of faith. This included his definition of faith, as well as various

components that offer distinctions of synonymous terms, such as faith and belief. Belief is

described as "the holding of certain ideas" (p. 11), which means that one does not have faith *in*

particular concepts or ideas, but is trust or loyalty in one's beliefs. He expands on this idea by

discussing how the term faith has changed over time, as faith was a term that should be

understood as a verb and not as a noun, which is how it is understood in the English language.

This is different than it has been understood in the classical writings of the major religious

traditions, such as Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Christianity. Fowler (1981) states, "Faith

involves an alignment of the heart or will, a commitment of loyalty and trust…One commits

oneself to that which is known or acknowledged, and lives loyally, with life and character being

shaped by that commitment" (p. 11). Towards the end of his commentary on faith and belief he

says the following:

Equating [faith] with the modern understanding of belief, means to perpetuate and widen

the modern divorce of belief and faith. If faith is reduced to belief in creedal statements

and doctrinal formulations, then sensitive and responsible persons are likely to judge that

they must live 'without faith.' But if faith is understood as trust in another and as loyalty

to a transcendent center of value and power, then the issue of faith – and the possibility of

religious faith – becomes lively and open again. (p. 14)

Fowler (1981) sees faith as always being relational; one needs others and/or objects in order to

generate meaning. Faith is also being able to know or "acting upon and 'composing' of the

known" (Fowler, 1981, p. 19). Therefore, one cannot know without others or objects in which to

generate meaning. That is to say, one may not find purpose and value in something if they are

not able to experience it in relation to others.

Fowler understands his stages of change model as a constuctivist theory (1986). Being a

stage model, this means that with each stage there are "more complex inner differentiations,

more elaborate operations (operations upon operations), wider comprehensiveness, and greater

overall flexibility of functioning" (Folwer, 1986, p. 31). It is a hierarchical, ordered progression.

His model is made up of six stages and one pre-stage.

Prior to stage one, Fowler (1981) describes *Undifferentiated faith* (also known as *Primal

faith*). This is a pre-stage that occurs in infancy and is pre-language. Here the beginnings of trust,

courage, hope and love battle with "threats of abandonment, inconsistencies and deprivations" on

one's environment (p. 121). Faith is determined by the primary caregiver and the actions,

whether positive or negative, underlie what follows in one's faith development.

The first stage is entitled *Intuitive-Projective faith*. This typically occurs between the ages

of three and seven where one begins to understand faith in relation to adults. One generates long-

lasting images that lack logical thought, as one continually encounters "novelties for which no

stable operations of knowing have been formed" (Fowler, 1981, p. 133). The thoughts of those

around them cannot be differentiated from their own. This is the first time one becomes self-aware and is exposed to powerful traditions within cultures and families.

The second stage is *Mythic-Literal faith*. Fowler describes this stage occurring in "school children;" however, it may be also be found in adolescents and adults. Logical, concrete operations occur and one begins to take on the stories of the communities in which they exist. These stories and narratives help guide how they create meaning. The meanings from stage one now become "sealed over" or "trapped" in the narratives of their communities (Fowler, 1981, p. 149).

Third is the *Synthetic-Conventional faith* stage. This occurs typically in early adolescence and is also known as a "conformist stage" (Fowler, 1981, p. 172). One's identity and worth is based on others and is a major concern, which help shape one's personality. Beliefs form out of these relations and are not critically examined.

Fowler's (1981) fourth stage is *Individuative-Reflective faith.* Unlike stage three, one's beliefs and values are critically examined, as one begins to take responsibility for one's own commitments, which ultimately lead to unavoidable tensions. This typically occurs in late adolescence and into adulthood. One's identity is *not* defined by others but seeks to gain control. It is known as the "demythologizing" stage because of its focus on the conscious and loss of mystery found in the unconscious. One is considered self-certain in these new meanings.

Stage five is known as *Conjunctive faith* (also known as Paradoxical-Consolidative faith) and it would be unusual for one to reach this stage prior to mid-life. Here one develops a "second naivete," as Fowler (1986) describes this as "an epistemological humility in face of the intricacy and richness of mystery" (p. 30). One is alive to paradox when finding meaning or truth and is

receptive to one's meaning as being part of a larger purpose or group. There is a commitment to justice and "uses multiple names and metaphors for the holy" (Fowler, 1986, p. 31).

The sixth and final stage of faith is *Universalizing faith*. This is rare for anyone to achieve this level. Criteria for stage six include "inclusiveness of community, of radical commitment to justice and love and of selfless passion for a transformed world, a world made over not in *their* images, but in accordance with an intentionality both divine and transcendent" (Fowler, 1981, p. 201). During this stage one decentralizes one's self as the reference point in viewing the world and "one begins to love and value from a centering located in the Ultimate" (Fowler, 1986, p. 31).

Fowler's model (1981) does not focus on the content found within each stage, such as specific religious practices, but on structures. In order for one to transition from one stage or another he lists out seven operational aspects one must consider. These various structural aspects do not always transition evenly onto the next stage and may even create a "drag" on this process (Fowler, 1986, p. 33). Each of these structural aspects combines to make a structural whole or a "dynamic unity" of "internal connections" (p. 31). These seven structural aspects include: (a) form of logic (based on Piaget's work on cognitive stages); (b) role-taking (based on Selman's work on social perspective taking); (c) form of moral judgement (based on Kohlberg's stages of moral reasoning); (d) bounds of social awareness (inclusiveness of reference groups); (e) locus of authority (patterns of constitute-knowing and commitment; (f) form of world coherence (comprehensive sense of unified meanings); and (g) symbolic functioning (logic of conviction).

Strengths. One advantage of Fowler's (1981) model is that it does not limit faith to a particular religion, but understands faith as a "human universal" (Dykstra, 1986). Therefore, faith

could mean the same thing for every religion and is more generic. Then, in understanding faith in terms of structures, it does not rely on the contents and sees structural *levels* as norms. It allows one to place oneself within a specific stage, rather than to be ascribing to specific values, ways of living, and beliefs and specific religions.

Fowler's (1981) model also ignited an excitement in finding out how people generate meaning, which Heywood (2008) described as the theory's "fruitfulness." Because it allows interviewees to discuss where they find value and faith development has allowed for insights into pastoral care and even to thoughts on why people leave the church (Heywood, 2008). Fowler, himself, believes that simply providing the opportunity to discuss one's faith and engage in such conversation with people that many whom he has interviewed have described it has a therapeutic endeavor (Fowler, 1986).

Weaknesses. Although Fowler's (1981) original model has generated an extensive amount of research over the past 30 years, it has not come without criticism (Streib, 2005). Streib (2005) has argued that the approaches to using Fowler's (1981) model have been far from homogeneous, as they have loose theoretical groundings and offer a plethora of research methods. Although many have chosen to use the *Manual for Faith Development Research* (Moseley, Jarvis, & Fowler, 1986; Moseley, Jarvis, Fowler, & DeNicola, 1993), others have veered in attempting to create a shorter, psychometric tool to measure faith development (Barnes, Doyle, & Johnson, 1989; Clore 1997; Green & Hoffman, 1989; Leak, 2003; Leak, Louks, & Bowlin, 1999; Swenson, Fuller, & Clements, 1993) while others who have criticized Fowler (1981) have sought alternative views (Clore & Fitzgerald, 2002; Streib, 2001, 2005).

Another dilemma related to research includes the research tools. Parker (2006) did an evaluation of several different instruments used to measure faith development. Among the instruments evaluated were The Faith Development Interview (FDI), The Faith Styles Scale (FSS), and The Faith Development Scale (FDS). Similar instruments, developed by Green and Hoffman (1989), Rose (1991), Hoffman (1994), Clore (1997), and Leak, Louks, & Bowlin, 1999) were also discussed. In conclusion, he noted the "best validated and most reliable of the measures" (Parker, 2006, pp. 345-346) is the FDI. It is the original or "classic" method, used to gather data is through a "semi-clinical" interview that covers four dimensions: life review, relationships, present values and commitments, and religion. This comes from the *Manual for Faith Development Research* (Moseley, Jarvis, & Fowler, 1986; Moseley, Jarvis, Fowler, & DeNicola, 1993). It is "an interview of about two hours results in 30 to 50 pages of text abundant with belief statements and personal narratives" (Streib, 2005, p. 101). Therefore, a limitation is the amount of time it takes to conduct such an interview and the "scoring protocol neglects the relational and affective dimensions in FDI answers" (Parker, 2006, p. 346). Those who choose to use the briefer scales run the risk of using a non-valid measurement tool and often do no include all aspects of Fowler's theory.

A struggle that faith development theory continues to wrestle with today is with postmodernism. Fowler understands this perspective as a phenomenon that reflects "patterns of radical secularization and the erosion of religious and moral authority, on the one hand, and, paradoxically, the worldwide growth of fundamentalists, and conservative faith practices, on the other" (Fowler & Dell, 2006, p. 44). Scholars such as Heinz Streib, James Fowler, and John McDargh discussed the issue of postmodernism in a 2001 issue of *The International Journal for*

the Psychology of Religion. McDargh (2001) brought to light the "postmodern problem of foundations, or whether it is possible to speak meaningfully of a universal human religious orientation or potentiality" (p. 185). He discusses both scientific and theological arguments against Fowler's (1981) *Stages of Faith*, which he counter argues against using the work of philosophical theologian Conn (1988) on self-transcendence. It provides an enlightening link on how one may amalgamate both psychology and theology.

Streib (2001) believes that because of the postmodern problems that Fowler's (1981) theory faces, specifically the fundamentalist movements, a new theory needs to be constructed. Rather than a cognitive developmental motor, Streib (2001) believed the focus should be shifting to religious development, which led him to propose the religious styles perspective. This emphasizes factors of life-history and life world. In rejecting the stage model, Streib (2001) adopted a milestone model. "A milestone model draws the respective style as a rising curve that descends again after a culminating point and persists on a lower level, whereas the subsequent styles attain their own climaxes" (Streib, 2001, p. 149). He suggests five religious styles: (a) subjective; (b) instrumental-reciprocal or 'do-ut-des'; (c) mutual; (d) individuative-systemic; and (e) dialogical. One develops various styles during their lives, which they will always have access to and may or may not be applied to religious matters.

In a latter article, Streib (2005) would again propose his religious styles perspective, as he argued for a revision of faith development *research*. He develops a framework to account for structural diversity, content-specific quality, and narrativity of faith, which he says is lacking in "classical" faith development research design. Conducting a literature review on faith development research, he proposed content and narrative analysis to be included as steps in data

analysis. This stems from the lack of life history and life world relatedness of religion as stated previously (Streib, 2001). The most recent Manuel for Faith Development Research (Fowler, Streib, & Keller, 2004) has undergone changes since the first and second editions in order to address criticisms of faith development research made by Streib (2001, 2005). The new method offers more importance to all of the structural aspects, as well as accepts the influence of post-modernity on faith development. It has yet to be identified as a valid measure (Parker, 2006).

Fowler believes that his biggest critics who oppose his theory are those who disagree with his understanding and definition of faith (Fowler & Dell, 2006). This is a theological difference mainly from Christians who hold faith as being unique to Christianity or to other religions. It is apparent that if one does not hold onto his definition of faith as being "universally human" then it very much limits his theory. Fowler has continued to hold onto his claim that the "stage sequence is sequential, invariant, and hierarchical" (Fowler & Dell, 2006, p. 171) despite others who claim this is not the case with faith (Dykstra, 1986, Streib, 2001).

Alternative Views. Another theorist associated with faith development is John Westerhoff III. He differs in his understanding of faith, as he ties faith to religion, specifically Christianity. His original model includes four styles of faith development, which include *experienced, affiliative, searching, and owned faith* (Westerhoff, 1976). *Experienced faith* begins in early life and revolves around relationships of trust, while *affiliative faith* entails an individual who accepts the faith of those significant peers and others around them without critical thought. The third faith style, *searching faith*, often occurs during adolescence and involves critical judgement of making sense of the world. Lastly, *owned faith* is when an individual has

reconstructed meaning and develop ones own personal faith identity (Bridger, 1995). He likens

faith to rings of a tree. Each level is not better than the previous, but represents growth.

Westerhoff has reworked this model and used a metaphor of three pathways to God. Experienced and affiliated faiths were combined into *affiliative-experiencing path*, which is cognizant of the development of a nurtured faith. Next is *the illuminative-reflective path* that focuses on one's search for faith, which offers less security. Lastly, is the *unitive-integrating path*. This is a combination of the first two pathways that ultimately generate an owned faith (Bridger, 1995).

Clore and Fitzgerald (2002) proposed what they call intentional faith. They suggest formulating a theory on Bernard Longergan's congnitional theory (Longergan, 1957, 1972), as this theory assumes there is a universal process of human cognition. Their focus lies in categorizing one's "way of faith" based on four levels of knowledge, which include symbols and common sense, rational thought and sound judgement, responsible decision and self-authentication, and transcendence. These dimensions of knowing were related to Four Ways of Faith: (a) common; (b) thoughtful; (c) responsible; and (d) transcendent faith. Their model understands faith development as "additive and integrative, rather than a sequence of abandonment and acquisition" (p. 106), and that this process is not necessarily related to age. They used a 30 item psychometric scale based on an earlier scale developed by Clore (1997). This measurement is not considered a reliable and valid tool (Streib, 2005).

Dykstra (1986) offered a hypothesis on faith, not specifically a new model; however, it is worth mentioning, as it stems from one of the main criticism of Fowler's (1981) theory – the definition of faith. It is important to note that in his proposal he acknowledged this was not the

only understanding of faith and that he believed offering his perspective would encourage others to do the same. He spoke of faith from a Christian perspective and defined faith as the following: "appropriate and intentional participation in the redemptive activity of God" (p. 55). Similar to Fowler (1981), faith is seen as a verb, as one must *respond* appropriately to the knowledge they have been given. For example, who they believe God to be and what they believe God to be doing. However, faith cannot be a reality without God and is not a human universal. Dykstra (1986) believes this understanding of faith is not the creation of meaning, but "the appropriate of meaning outside ourselves" (p. 57). Therefore, meaning is a by-product, not the goal, of faith since it is given. Implications of this approach would ascertain that faith is not always progressive in nature and offers various levels of participation. One should be focused on one's participation in faith rather than on the endpoint, which this perspective would believe faith has no endpoint.

Slee (2004) sought to explore and understand the patterns of women's faith development theory by interviewing 30 Christian women. The first pattern discussed is the experience of alienation, which entails "a lack of authentic connection to self, others, and God; feelings of emptiness; loss of meaning; and a sense of paralysis or lack of movement" (Desrosiers, 2012, p. 17). If one recognizes this alienation it may lead to an awakening, which is another pattern found in women. This is a deeper connection both to the self and to the divine. Awakening occurred more in moments of ordinary experiences, rather than what some call mystical experiences, and often happens multiple times throughout one's lifetime. Lastly, faith development of women understood their faith commitments through their relationship with God and others. This last pattern aligns itself with previous feminist psychologists and theologians who believe women's

faith development is primarily relational (Gilligan, 1982; Grey, 1999; Heyward, 1982; Jordan, 1991).

In a more recent critique of Fowler's (1981) model, Heywood (2008) argues for a paradigm change within faith development theory. Although he does not offer a specific new model, he aligns himself with those who believe that Fowler has not adequately addressed post-modern thought. He is disappointed with the lack of personal testing by Fowler himself, challenges Fowler's reliance on his own modernist approach, and does not accept stage six of his model, *Universalizing faith*, as existing. Heywood (2008) applauds Fowler's theory for it's fruitfulness, or it's ability to generate so much excitement in regards to seeking out how people generate meaning. He even believes that Fowler's desire to find "ways of knowing and constructing the world based on values and commitments" (Heywood, 2008, p. 270) aligns itself with post-modern thought; however, it is the structural development, which he claims allows this to be completely understood. Similar to other critics of Fowler (McDargh, 2001, Streib, 2001, 2005), Heywood (2008) believes that generating a normative theory in seeking truth, as well as not being able to address issues of radical monotheism to be an issue.

As one may see, Fowler's (1981) model of faith development theory has received a variety of responses. Despite the fruitfulness in generating interest on the development of faith (Heywood, 2008), scholars have not fully agreed in regards to various aspects of Fowler's (1981) model. The definition of faith (Dykstra, 1986, Westerhoff, 1976), how to measure it's development (Barnes, Doyle, & Johnson, 1989; Clore 1997; Green & Hoffman, 1989; Leak, 2003; Leak, Louks, & Bowlin, 1999; Swenson, Fuller, & Clements, 1993), and Fowler's epistemic orientation (Heywood, 2008, McDargh, 2001, Streib, 2001) have all been challenged.

Therefore, how one agrees or disagrees with these challenges will lead to one's own understanding of faith development and how one applies it into one's own life and the life of others.

Faith Development Theory and Sport Psychology

Understanding faith as a universal human quality allows faith development theory (FDT) to be relevant to the field of sport psychology. Considering Fowler's (1981) stages of faith model, this has implications for both applied settings and research purposes. Fowler (1981) sees FDT as a theory of praxis and it may be one approach that a sport psychology consultant may take to address issues of meaning, more specifically, issues relating to spirituality and/or religion. Determining one's level of faith stage may be done in two different ways: (a) formally administering the faith development interview (Fowler, 1981); or (b) informally listening to the description of an athlete's or coach's faith experiences and comparing those experiences with Fowler's (1981) model (Parker, 2011). Assessing one's faith stage could allow one to encourage the strengths of the particular stage. For example, if an athlete may be dealing with teammate difficulties and considered to be at the synthetic-conventional faith stage (stage 3) then it may be beneficial to try and understand the impact of difficulties on all parties (e.g., self, teammates, coaches, strength coaches), as this is inspired by interpersonal qualities. However, this style of faith may also be sensitive to others' opinion (Fowler, 1981). This framework also lends itself to human growth and development rather than pathology, which fits well with educational sport psychology consultants.

Being aware of FDT and incorporating it into one's philosophy of practice has the ability to increase one's competency in working with spiritual and/or religious athletes and coaches. Because FDT looks to describe universal structures of faith,

> It provides a generic, nonsectarian map for diagnosing and assessing the nature and role of a person's faith apart from its specific contents. This permits a counselor to work with a client's faith structures without having to endorse or challenge specific religious beliefs. (Parker, 2011, p. 112)

For a sport psychology consultant who does not feel comfortable dealing with religious matters, this may prove one medium to address individuals who may ascribe to a particular faith with which one may be unfamiliar.

Researchers may also find FDT relevant to questions they may have. Sport psychology is lacking scholarly work addressing issues of spirituality and religion (Watson & Nesti, 2005) and FDT offers a universal understanding of faith that may be more applicable to applied settings. It also offers a measurement tool, although with limitations, that is considered both reliable and valid (Parker, 2006).

Although Fowler's (1981) model may prove helpful within sport psychology consulting, there is no universal agreed upon model of faith or spiritual development (Desrosiers, 2012). Therefore, if one seeks to include faith development theory within their theoretical framework one should consider which approach to use based on the athlete or coach with whom they are working (Desrosiers, 2012). For example, cognitive models, such as Fowler (1981) and Clore and Fitzgerald (2002), may encourage some to broaden their perspective of viewpoints or beliefs other than their own and help them make choices that resonate with their sense of self. A

feminist perspective may be utilized when one is experiencing alienation from their self and others, especially if one is working with a female (Desrosiers, 2012); however, one may also find working from a womanist perspective more appropriate for "a black feminist or feminist of color" (Coleman, Cannon, Razak, Monroe, Majeed, Skye, Mitchem, & West, 2006), as it seeks to be informed on a "daily reorientation in a race-, sex-, and class-conscious society" (Cannon, Johnson, & Sims, 2005, p. 139). It is important to note that although many assign black feminists as womanists, this is not always the case, as it is dependent on how a woman chooses to identify herself (Coleman et al., 2006). Expanding upon the concept of faith are the terms religion and spirituality.

Religion and Spirituality

Two terms that are often synonymous with one another and are relevant to this paper include spirituality and religion. Although they are historically related, they are two different concepts that need to be operationalized and discussed. A brief distinction will be made between the two concepts; however, the development of the term spirituality and its relation to sport psychology will be discussed in greater depth.

Religion may be understood as a "system of beliefs and practices observed by a community, supported by rituals that acknowledge, worship, communicate with, or approach the Sacred, the Divine, God (in Western cultures), or Ultimate Truth, Reality, or nirvana (in Eastern cultures)" (Koenig, 2008, p. 11). It may be categorized into either organizational or nonorganizational religiosity. Organizational, which some refer to as organized religion, is an activity that may be public, social, and institutional and often involved religious services. Nonorganizational religiosity is considered more private, personal, and individual in comparison

to organizational, and includes religious activities such as reading scripture, prayer or meditation done in private by oneself (Koenig, 2008). This discussion above refers to more traditional views of religion, yet in nontraditional forms it may include groups such as "astrology, divination, witchcraft, invoking of spirits, spiritism, and a variety of indigenous, folk, or animistic rituals and practices related to the supernatural" (Koenig, 2008, p. 12).

Spirituality is a phenomenon that has come to mean different things to different people. In Western culture, spirituality has been dominated by the Christian religion and often refers to the Christian narrative; however, the 1960's ushered in a New Age spirituality that has broadened how one understands this term and moved away from patriarchal institutions and authorities (Robinson, 2007a). This was sparked by postmodern thoughts, which insists that there is no objective reality or truth. The root of spirituality is the 'spirit.' This comes from the Latin word *spiritus*, which means breath, wind, and life principle; therefore, "spirituality is about the practice and outworking of the spirit and the ways which it is developed, with its different aspects and relationships connected, sustained and understood" (Robinson, 2007a, p. 24). Robinson's (2007a) model of spirituality argues three parts are needed to create a working definition: (a) awareness and appreciation of the other; (b) the capacity to respond to the other; and (c) developing life meaning. Awareness of the other includes the self, interpersonal relationships, groups, the environment, and a Deity (deities), which reflect the belief that spirituality is relational. Responding to the other refers to the action one takes in light of one's own belief to their spirituality. Lastly, developing meaning simply refers to how one finds meaning and value and includes one's hopes, purposes, and resolutions that are often found

through experience. Religion, in this understanding, is only one expression of spirituality (Robinson, 2007a).

Another definition of spirituality comes from Anandarajah and Hight (2001):

Spirituality is a complex and multidimensional part of the human experience. It has cognitive, experiential, and behavior aspects. The cognitive or philosophic aspects include the search for meaning, purpose, and truth in life and the beliefs and values by which an individual lives. The experiential and emotional aspects involve feelings of hope, love, connection, inner peace, comfort and support. These are reflected in the quality of an individual's inner resources, the ability to give and receive spiritual love, and the types of relationships and connections that exist with self, the community, the environment and nature, and the transcendent (e.g., power greater than self, a value system, God, cosmic consciousness). The behavior aspects of spirituality involve the way a person externally manifests individual spiritual beliefs and inner spiritual state. Many people find spirituality through religion or through a personal relationship with the divine. However, others may find it through a connection to nature, through music and the arts, through a set of values and principles or through a quest for scientific truth (p. 83).

Spirituality involves meaning and purpose, relationship, and action. These experiences may even enter into the world of performance and sport. Jim Loehr and Tony Schwartz (2003) refer to spirituality as "spiritual energy" and define it as "the connection to a deeply held set of values and to a purpose beyond our self-interest" (p. 110). For them, when they describe the necessary energies one must balance – physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual – it is the spiritual energy

that is most vital to one's performance and overall well-being. In a similar vein, although there is

a dearth of research on spirituality in the field of sport psychology, there have been scholars to

discuss the phenomenon.

Ken Ravizza (2002) referring to performance excellence in sport suggested, "when

physical, mental, and emotional components join together movement takes on a spiritual

dimension in the sense of purpose that is attained" (p. 14). This reflects the multidimensionality

of spirituality and the connection with what he describes as a "greater whole" (p. 14). Watson

and Nesti (2005) define it as "an athlete's close relationships, or extraordinary and self-affirming

moments in life such as winning an Olympic medal, or securing a personal best" (p. 229). These

definitions also see spirituality as being defined however each person chooses to do so, which

may or may not include religion. As Koenig (2008) reflected on his overview of various

definitions of spirituality, they are all positive in nature. Spirituality is something that people

would like to experience in their lives.

The definitions above are only a few of the plethora of ways in which scholars have

defined spirituality. It seems as though without a clear and concise definition that one would

avoid such terms; however, in his work on including spirituality and religion into medicine and

health Harold Koenig (2008) offers a model in how to approach spirituality that may overlap

with sport psychology. He recommends two definitions of spirituality. One that is used for

research, and one used for clinical settings, or applied work. The latter may be understood in the

following way:

> In the care of patients, however, it is not necessary to define spirituality as rigorously as
>
> when conducting research. In clinical settings, it is more useful to define spirituality as

broadly as possible so that all patients have an opportunity to have their spiritual needs addressed (in whatever way they define those spiritual needs)…I believe the overall goal of the clinician is to find common ground with all patients, and that means not trying to change beliefs, but rather trying to support beliefs that help patients cope. (Koenig, 2008, pp. 18, 19)

Although referring to the medical field, this approach provides insight into how applied sport psychology consultants might address spirituality. Based on the understanding within sport psychology of spirituality, and recognizing it's intrinsic worth for an individual and/or team, spirituality should be defined by those with whom one works. In this qualitative investigation it was imperative to take this broad stance on spirituality to include all participants.

Relevant to this conversation is the notion of transcendence. Transcendence is a term often used in spiritual or religious sense, and is salient to performance. Parry (2007) directs readers to two ways one may understand this term: the first he says is "going beyond certain limits, surpassing or exceeding" (p. 181), while the second is "superior or supreme" (p. 181). Delving deeper into how one may understand transcendence, specifically as part of spirituality, Robinson (2007b) states that it involves transcending limitations of the self. This process involves "acceptance of shared responsibility, the negotiation of responsibility and the development of creative relationships" (p. 57). Sport psychology consultants are one group that could take part in this process of transcendence within the context of sport when considering spirituality.

In recognizing spirituality as broad term based on the definitions above, especially those within the field of sport psychology, one may presume it enters into a consulting relationship in

various forms. Watson and Nesti (2005) believe that if spirituality is included into a sport psychology consultant's framework it would provide both the athlete and sport psychology consultant an opportunity to not only address sport related issues, but non-sport issues as well, which lends itself to a more holistic approach. One way spirituality may be included is by including a religious framework for an athlete or coach who may desire to integrate their faith beliefs within performance consulting.

Religion and Sport

Could you imagine if the first half of the 2012 Summer Olympic games were devoted to religious ceremonies? Although this may seem strange in our eyes today, this was the case for ancient Olympians in 776 B.C.E. (Guttmann, 1992). For a five day Olympic festival, which was seen as an exercise of devotion to Zeus, the Greek god, the time was split between religious ceremonies and competition (Roberts & Yamane, 2012). This was one of four Greek athletic festivals, which were each held in honor of different gods. Other ancient cultures where religion and sport were also intertwined included the Central American Mayans and Aztecs. Built alongside their religious temples were extravagant stone ball courts, in which games were played to reenact creation myths; these ended with a player being sacrificed to the gods for whom they were playing (Guttmann, 1992). Native North Americans were also known to combine physical competition with religion (Baker, 2007). Our history is littered with examples of the marriage between religion and sport, yet this now seems like a dichotomy, as sport has followed the path of the Romans by secularizing sport and being used for entertainment purposes (Roberts & Yamane, 2012).

Although both religion and sport are relevant in our society today, they are not intertwined as they once were in our past. In contemporary American society, it is argued that until competitive sport became popular it was solely religion that provided one with a diversion from the routines of life, a model of clarity regarding rules, and heroic examples one could admire and emulate (Mandelbaum, 2004). Coakley (2009) adds that sports in society are salient as they are important parts of people's lives and are connected with important ideas and meaning. One such ideology many connect with sport includes the sphere of religion. Our society cannot ignore this fact.

Religion and sport are two distinct institutions, in which many believe there is a significant link (Coakley, 2009). Thus, I include how these two areas have interacted with one another throughout history, and how society, especially Western society, understands them today. The influence of religion and sport will also be brought into a discussion of its impact on the discipline of sport psychology. It is important to note that I recognize there are many religious viewpoints that enter into sport (Magdalinski & Chandler, 2002); however, the primary focus is on the Christian worldview. Because the Christian narrative has dominated Western culture (Robinson, 2007), the continued lack of research of Christianity within sport psychology (Watson & Nesti, 2005), and my own bias as a Christian, I believed this to be the most beneficial path for the purposes of this section.

Further Understanding Religion and Sport

There are numerous ways in which sociologists have come to understand and define religion, and it is dependent on what definition one accepts that will ultimately create the boundaries in which one views such phenomena (Roberts & Yamane, 2012). Roberts and

Yamane (2012) group definitions of religion into one of three approaches: (a) substantive; (b) functional; and (c) symbolic. Substantive definitions of religion attempt to capture the "substance" or "essence" of religion, which in the Western world equates religion with beliefs or how orthodox one is. Accordingly, Roberts and Yamane (2012) define an orthodox person as, "one who believes the traditional doctrines of a religious tradition" (p. 4). One critique of these definitions is that they are too narrow, as they focus more on a traditional perspective. Functional definitions seek to "focus not on what religion essentially *is* but on what it *does*" (p. 6). Religion seeks to discover and give meaning to people's lives, and this perspective recognizes this comes in other forms outside of traditional religious doctrine. Therefore, everyone is considered religious under this definition. Lastly, there is the symbolic definition, which is considered a specific type of the functional definition since it also seeks to understand what religion *does.* Here religion is seen as "a system of symbols which acts in that the symbols provide a blueprint for understanding the world" (p. 9). These symbols include specific objects, behaviors, and stories to help generate and create meaning. For example, from the Christian tradition one might think of the cross, baptism, and the creation story.

Sport sociologist Jay Coakley (2009) ascribes to a functional definition of religion. He defines religion as a "shared set of beliefs and rituals focused on the ultimate concerns of human existence (p. 530). This may apply in the traditional religious sense, but it also takes the form of nontraditional religious understanding. Coakley makes this clear when he describes how objects, symbols, and ceremonies may be either sacred or profane. Sacred is understood as objects and activities that are directly connected with the supernatural or the divine, while the profane are not. The example he uses is comparing a church and a stadium. Both are places that people find

significant meaning when inside; however, a church is found within the sacred realm, whereas a stadium is considered within the realm of the profane. This is especially true for Christians who use their religion as a reference to associate specific objects or symbols, such as a church, with God. Using a functional definition of religion, I believe, is the best approach to viewing it alongside and within sport, as it includes both the traditional and nontraditional forms of religious meaning.

Sport is another term necessary to define for the purpose of this paper. Coakley (2009) describes two methods of thought in which people have sought to define sport. The first definition is a traditional perspective, which emphasize sports as "institutionalized competitive activities that involve rigorous physical exertion or the use of relatively complex physical skills by participants motivated by internal and external rewards" (p. 21). He breaks this definition of sports down by expanding on four parts: (a) sport as physical activities; (b) sports as competitive activities; (c) sports as institutionalized activities; and (d) sports as activities played for internal and external rewards. Because thinking of sports as physical activities can be a bit subjective, it may lead to some confusion, at times, regarding what are physical activities. Therefore, one may not think of chess or darts as a sport under this definition. Seeing sports as competitive activities also generates interesting distinctions. If one were to compare a high school varsity basketball game with a pair of sisters "shooting around" for fun at their local park, this would prove to be sociologically different. Coakley (2009) said, "each of these activities involves different social dynamics, organization, and implications" (p. 7). For example, high school basketball has specific rules, whereas two sisters may be playing by different rules each time they "shoot around," if at all. One also needs to discuss sports as institutionalized activities, according to

Coakley (2009), as the process of institutionalization typically involves four features according to sociologists: (a) rules of the activities become standardized, (b) official regulatory agencies take over rule enforcement, (c) organizational and technical aspects of the activity become important, and (d) learning of game skills become formalized. Lastly is the idea that sports are played for internal and external rewards and refers to the motivation for participation. Coakley (2009) makes the distinction between play and dramatic spectacle. Play is considered more spontaneous and done for its own sake, whereas dramatic spectacle entails providing entertainment for an audience. Sports often entail a balance of both aspects.

An alternative definition of sport entails asking three questions about sports in relation to the particular cultures, in which they take place (Coakley, 2009). The first question asks, "What activities are defined as sports in a particular group or society?" (p. 8). Secondly, "Whose sports are most strongly supported and funded, especially with public facilities and money?" (p. 8). Lastly, "Who is advantaged and disadvantaged by the accepted definition of sports and the priorities used to allocate resources to sports?" (p. 8). These questions focus more on how each society comprehends sport, which stems from a belief that there is no universal definition of sport (Coakley, 2009). Although I believe the second definition to be important in exploring sport, it is the traditional definition that I believe is used most often in Western society, specifically within elite sport.

Christianity and Sport

According to sport sociologist Jay Coakley (2009), religion is used in sport in various ways: (a) "to cope with uncertainty"; (b) "to stay out of trouble"; (c) "to give meaning to sport participation"; (d) "to put sport participation into a balanced perspective; (e) "to establish team

solidarity and unity"; (f) "to reaffirm expectations, rules, and social control on teams"; (g) "to assert autonomy in the face of power"; (h) "to achieve personal and competitive success;" and (i) "to market games and sell tickets" (pp. 535-536). Religion and sport has been a topic of many discussions as of late among many media sources due to the presence of religious athletes, such as Tim Tebow (see Mirabito, Huffman, & Hardin, in review, for example) and Jeremy Lin, which might allow for one to see several of the uses stated above "in action." Although this example points to individuals relevant in today's culture, they are not the first religious athletes, more specifically, Christian athletes to be involved in elite sport. In light of this, one should consider how Christianity and sport have interacted in America in the past and how it has shaped Christian organizations and athletes today.

Muscular Christianity

A religious movement that was ignited in mid 19th century and found its way into the early 20th century within the culture of sport is *muscular Christianity.* Putney (2001) said, "Muscular Christianity can be defined simply as a Christian commitment to health and manliness" (p. 11). Christians who practiced according to the values of this movement believed that it was one's duty to maintain one's physical body, which included the use and involvement of sport and exercise to improve health, proper morals, and religious maturity. Origins of these ideas are aligned with the New Testament passages within the Bible, such as Mark 11:15 and 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (Putney, 2001). Mark 11:15 has been used by muscular Christians to exemplify manly exertion and refers to the story of Jesus entering the temple courts where he then overturns the tables of those who were buying and selling goods. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 is used to support the idea of physical health; the New International version of this passages states,

Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom

you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price.

Therefore honor God with your bodies.

Using these passages from the Bible as a foundation was important; however, there were other works of literature that helped spread such thoughts.

Charles Kingsley's novel *Two Years Ago* (1857) and Thomas Hughes' *Tom Brown's School Days* (1867) are credited as the earliest writers of muscular Christianity and their novels included adventure that infused high principles and manly Christian heroes, which reflects Kinsley and Hughes' displeasure of the English society at the time (Putney, 2001). Putney (2001) said that both Kingsly and Hughes "deplored the effect of industrialism on English society and wondered if traditional morality were sufficient to cope with it" (p. 12). Kingsley, in particular, included the common threads of athleticism, patriotism, and religion, which were aimed at Anglo-Saxon, Protestant, English males (Putney, 2001). Although muscular Christianity began in Europe and was imported to educated Americans around the same time, prior to 1880 muscular Christianity did not take hold in America because it was primarily an agricultural society and had recently gone through the Civil War (Putney, 2001). Men did not feel the need to prove their masculinity, as many worked hard labor jobs and/or had proved their manhood in battle. America's slow acceptance of muscular Christianity was also due to the fact that those who held onto the muscular Christian beliefs came from privileged backgrounds, typically from New England (Baker, 2007). It was not until America became more industrialized and Americans had more free time that an opportunity was created for this movement to truly grow (Putney, 2001).

American leaders, such as Senator Henry Cabot Lodge and Theodore Roosevelt supported the view of muscular Christianity (Putney, 2001). Christian clergy also were proponents of this movement, which included Reverend Horace Bushnell, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Dwight Lyman Moody, and Billy Sunday. However, unlike Kingsley's view of believing physical activity was beneficial primarily for England, Americans saw this concept as applying to all nations; it was seen as a more universal concept. These men who held positions of power were not shy in voicing their opinion of how exercise and sport might shape a "manlier" man. Muscular Christianity also included a gender bias towards males. Because women were seen as being more involved in raising children and involvement with religion, leaders were afraid of boys developing "effeminate" qualities. Therefore, muscular Christian leaders desired to counteract perceptions that Christian males were effeminate. Although women were encouraged to partake in a healthy lifestyle, competition was not seen as acceptable or beneficial (Baker, 2007).

One such way these supporters were able to instill muscular Christianity into society was to create organizations. Two such organizations include the Young Man's Christian Association (YMCA) and the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA). Although originally started in England in 1844, it came to America in 1851 where the first YMCA's in England prohibited all amusements and served as a "refuge of Bible study and prayer for young men seeking escape from the hazards of life on the streets" ("The Story," 2012). By 1860, the American YMCA decided to include gymnasiums, which expanded to over half of the 400 YMCA's having gymnasiums by 1890 (Baker, 2007). It was with the help of the Massachusetts's YMCA system that both basketball and volleyball were invented. These sports, especially basketball, would

become a popular evangelical tool of future organizations. The YMCA, today known as the "Y,"
maintains Christian principles; however, there is little effort to proselytize as they did when they
first started (Roberts & Yamane, 2012). Also, as the "Y" began to become more secularized,
other ministries took their place.

These newer sports ministry organizations that supported aspects of muscular Christianity
include the Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA), which became an official national
organization in 1954, and Athletes in Action (AIA), which began in 1966. Both organizations
used sport as a way to advance the gospel by gearing their ministry efforts mainly at athletes;
however, one difference between them was that AIA sponsored traveling teams. AIA's "sport of
choice" was basketball, which led to more African Americans joining this group, while FCA was
dominated by White, males until the mid-1970's (Baker, 2007). The birth of these two groups
came around the 1960s, which proved to be a pivotal time in the United States as it was
experiencing struggles with civil rights, the Vietnam War, and new lifestyles, such as New Age
spirituality (Robinson, 2007). Just as the original movement sought health and manliness through
sport that was encouraged by the privileged elite, it was now the elite Christian athletes that were
"spreading the gospel." Reflecting on this change over time, Roberts and Yamane (2012) noted
the difference of both sport and religion,

> Unlike the formative years of the YMCA, which used religion to legitimize sport, the
> roles are now reversed: These organizations use sport to legitimize religion, which
> suggests the increasing social significance of sport and the relatively decreasing social
> significance of religion. (p. 366)

Today FCA and AIA are only two of many sport ministries in the United States, and despite the notion of religion holding less social significance, it has not deterred Christian sport organizations in the United States from developing. Dating back to 1996 there were more than 600 such groups (Baker, 2007). Coakley (2009) stated that Christian organizations have used sport in three ways, such as (a) "promoting spiritual growth," (b) "recruiting new members and promoting religious beliefs and organizations," and (c) "promoting fundamentalist beliefs and evangelical orientations" (p. 531). These uses of sport by Christian sport organizations may have some support, as well as devout followers, yet they are not without criticisms. For example, believing that sport keeps athletes away from drugs may be true for some; however, in today's society this may seem far from the truth. Society has undergone many changes since the mid 1800s until now, which includes how Christians see sport and competition; however, despite such changes, the common thread that competitive sport is viewed as both physically and morally good seems to remain (Baker, 2007). This belief has not come without criticism.

Dilemma of Christianity and Sport

There have been numerous scholars who argue for the stance that the Christian ethic does not fit well with the culture of elite sport (Higgs, 1995; Higgs & Braswell, 2004; Hoffman, 1992a, 2010). Higgs and Braswell (2004) used the analogy of oil and water to represent the fit of sports and religion, compared to the more common thought that they are like "peanut butter and jelly." Shirl Hoffman (1992a, 2010) also has not been shy about voicing his opinion that sport and religion do not prove to be an easy marriage. In a more recent book of his, *Good Game: Christianity and the Culture of Sports*, Hoffman (2010) offered a wide array of perspectives that challenge how Christians have, and continue to view sport in a way that does not fully align with

the Christian ethic. Ascribing to Christianity himself, Hoffman (2010) accused the Christian

community as a whole of not taking the time to critically examine sport from an objective

standpoint. Because of this failure Hoffman (2010) said that many Christians wrongly accept the

following beliefs of Christianity and sport:

> That competition is sacred, that sport "builds up the temple of the Holy Spirit," that sport
>
> aids spiritual development through character education, that praying at sport events
>
> assures God's blessing and involvement, and that sport's value to Christianity is best
>
> measured in ways it can be used to spread the gospel. (pp. 21-22)

Among this list, competition has been especially troubling for him. Hoffman (1992b) believes

that competition always involves self-promotion, which he considers "the lifeblood of

competitive games" (p. 114). Competition cannot divorce itself from the self-interest it generates

in those involved, whether one has good intentions or not. This has led Christians to develop, as

Hoffman (2010) suggests, a "killer instinct" that included a lack of sympathy for those whom

one competes against (p. 149), which he argues is another product of accepting competition as

solely good. What does this juxtaposition between sport and Christianity mean for those

Christian athletes and Christian coaches who participate in sport? How do they make sense of

being in a position where two aspects of their lives collide—their Christian religion and sport?

In the conclusion of his book, Hoffman (2010) offers seven suggestions he believes

Christians may take in order to rethink sport. Four of these suggestions are aimed at Christian

institutions where athletics are played. One is for these athletic departments to take the time to

reassess their purpose for athletics so it may align with the institutional goals. A second

suggestion is for cooperation among institutions to abide by specific Christian ethics, which he

admits may be a barrier for Christian schools that compete against secular programs. Along this same thought is his suggestion to create friendships among competitors, as he believes relationships among opponents could help athletes refrain from acting outside of the Christian ethic. His last suggestion specifically aimed at institutions would be to move away from representational sport, which entails playing sport "in the name of a larger cause" (p. 289). This includes veering away from rivalries and school spirit. Individually, he suggests an "aesthetic disposition" (p. 287). This means one becomes aware of the multitude of attitudes and emotions that come with the involvement in sport, which can be used for reflection. Hoffman's (2010) other two suggestions to individuals include adopting the spirit of humility, and to reject moments where athletes and coaches may distinguish themselves, such as in post-game interviews. These actions would mean placing others before oneself. Some of Hoffman's (2010) advice may seem far-fetched, which he admits; however, it is a necessary step towards critically wrestling with the possibility of allowing Christian values to succeed within sport for those who ascribe to Christianity.

Stevenson (1991), intrigued by the visible presence of Christian athletes in professional and college sports, interviewed 31 athletes who were involved with AIA about their identities as a "Christian" and as an "athlete." Among this group of athletes he found that there were a variety of behaviors these athletes saw as acceptable within sport, and that most athletes did not perceive any major dilemmas in reconciling their Christian faith with elite sport. The athletes were categorized into one of three role-identity types, which included segregated, selective, or committed. Segregated types included those athletes who completely compartmentalized their identities as "Christian" and "athlete." Although this was the case, one of the main reasons for

doing so was their inability to know how to combine them. Selective types, which included the majority of the athletes in this study, included their Christian role-identity within sport; however, they accepted the values of sport, such as the use of violence and seeking one's own self-interest above others, which took priority of their religious values in the athletic setting. In being selective of their identities, four ways of using their Christianity in sport were found to be most prominent: (a) helping with emotions of winning and losing; (b) deciding to obey the rules of the game; (c) maintaining the right attitude; and (d) using sport to witness their faith. Lastly, the committed type included those whose dominant role identity in all settings was the Christian role-identity. Even with this outlook, it was not possible for their Christian faith to be fully expressed at all times within sport, and even led to some leaving sport completely. For example, some Christian athletes sought acceptance by their teammates and would compromise their values by choosing to drink alcohol in excess, while others struggled not to seek unfair advantages in sport.

These findings were examined using both a developmental and interactionist perspective (Stevenson, 1991). The developmental perspective examined the perceptions of how the athletes integrated one's faith into sport, and "the developmental nature of the Christian faith" (p. 371). This was an inductive process, as the athletes discussed their own perceptions of themselves as Christians. The ability and willingness to integrate their faith into sport was dependent on one's maturity of faith; the level of Christian maturity increased with the increased level of integration. The athletes in this study accepted this developmental perspective, as they believed faith to be a process and can be developed and matured, which is also an aspect of AIA's evangelical theology. A criticism of the developmental perspective is that these perspectives often come with

a bias from the creator of the model as to how faith matures or develops. Fowler (1981)'s model of faith development uses a stage model, which he believes can be generalized across all faith journeys; however, that is based on his own definition of faith and epistemic orientation.

The second approach, the interactionist perspective, observes how one presents one's particular role identity in various social situations based on the rewards or costs of ascribing to particular roles (McCall & Simmons, 1978). Ascribing to the various role-identity types was therefore dependent on how the athletes saw the various aspects of their identities being supported by those around them. The committed Christian athlete had less problems weighing out the positive and negative consequences of acting in a certain manner that was congruent with Christian beliefs, such as having a positive attitude or playing by the rules, than the segregated and selective Christian athletes, as their most salient identity was grounded in their faith. These findings suggest that although there may be a paradox between Christianity and elite sport, many athletes hold onto their Christian identity within this culture. One must recognize that Christian athletes adopt different methods of balancing their role-identities, which may be due to their maturity of faith and/or the potential consequences of doing so. That being said, it seems to be a difficult task to be true to oneself within elite sport.

Another study conducted by Stevenson (1997) delved deeper into the life of Christian athletes and their experience by asking in what ways they struggle and cope with the culture of elite sport. In-depth interviews were conducted with 31 professed Christian athletes who were associated with AIA. The Christian athletes in this study demonstrated five common difficulties of elite sport: (a) the importance of winning; (b) the importance of social status; (c) the relationship with the team and with the coach; (d) the relationship with opponents; and (e)

expectations of others outside of sport. These struggles produced two types of consequences. One consequence was that some of these Christian athletes had experienced a "crisis" in attempting to live up to the demands of elite sport. For example, when athletes did not perform to their expectations or relationships with coaches were not positive. The second was to find a purpose behind their involvement in sport. These difficulties led these athletes, who were either non-Christians or fallen-away Christians at the time of their struggles, to turn to Christianity. In doing so, three responses followed: (a) an intensified commitment to sport; (b) operate within a "Christian" manner; or (c) reject and leave elite sport. The first group, by increasing their commitment to sport, often spoke of wanting to win even more than before; however, this led athletes to stop becoming critical of the sporting environment. For those who chose to operate in a "Christian" manner, they did not accept the culture of sport completely as the first group, but were pragmatic in their approach. It was important for them to operate within the rules of sport, maintain the "right attitude," and use their position as a platform to witness to others. Lastly, the final group, which consisted of just three Christian athletes, chose to reject the culture of elite sport altogether and leave their sport. Because their faith took priority in their lives, when sport proved to cause significant strains on their faith, which consisted of compromising one's faith, questioning violent practices, and recognizing the self-absorption of athletes at the elite level it led them to choose their faith over sport.

Originally, Stevenson (1997) used "a model of conflict, doubt, and resolution" developed by Jay Coakley (1994) to explain how Christian athletes deal with conflicts within sport; however, this model has since been changed because of Stevenson's (1997) work and represent his findings. In the most recent model, Coakley (2009) states there are two sources of conflict for

Christians that may cause one to doubt the culture of sport: (a) the use of violence and intimidation; and (b) self-promotion and the aggressive pursuit of personal success. Three strategies Christians may take include focusing on the ascetic aspects of sport, operating in a "Christian" manner, as listed by Stevenson (1997), or giving full priority to one's Christian beliefs, which may lead to the withdrawal of sport. In light of these thoughts, Stevenson (1997) suggested his findings support the idea that Christian athletes come into conflict within elite sport and one way in which they cope with such struggles is to turn to Christianity. These studies provide insight into how Christian athletes conceptualize their faith in sport, yet another group worth mentioning are the Christian coaches.

Bennett, Sagas, Fleming, & Von Roenn (2005) conducted a case study of a Division I male Christian coach who openly struggled with the culture of elite sport. Three dilemmas emerged: (a) winning; (b) importance of social status; and (c) behavior in and out of the sport setting. His solutions to these dilemmas included disconnecting from his identity as a coach, having a "take it or leave it" mentality, and reaffirming God's control of his life. The themes above overlap with many of the same problems Christian athletes seem to face. Although not addressed within this particular article, another form of coping for Christian athletes and coaches has been the use of prayer (Watson & Czech, 2005).

Christian Prayer in Sport

It may be hard to divorce oneself from the thought of Tim Tebow kneeling down on one knee to pray during a football game when thinking of Christian prayer in sport. His life, especially this action described above, which has now earned the term "Tebowing," has become a cultural phenomenon (see Tebowing.com). However, prayer within sport has come in other

forms other than "Tebowing," that I believe, has caused some to ignore the importance of what is such a sacred act for many, including Tim Tebow. Prayer is a significant practice within Christianity that may be understood as "the adherents' religious practice of communicating with God" (Watson & Czech, 2005, p. 27). This act has been found to be a valuable practice for both Christian athletes (Czech, Wrisberg, Fisher, Thompson, & Hayes, 2004; Park, 2000; Vernacchia, McGuire, Reardon, & Templin, 2000) and Christian coaches (Egli, Czech, Shaver, Todd, & Gentner, in review).

A significant study that provides insight into how Christian athletes use prayer is the work of Czech et al. (2004). They interviewed nine Division I Christian athletes and asked them of their experiences of prayer within sport. The results demonstrated four themes: (a) performance related prayers; (b) prayer routines; (c) thankfulness; and (d) acceptance of God's will. This religious practice offered these Christian athletes a way of coping with the stresses of sport, which expands upon Stevenson's (1997) and Coakley's (2009) work of how Christian athletes deal with conflict. Asking a similar question of Christian coaches, Egli et al. (in review) found prayer to be used to rely on God's guidance, to understand and maintain their roles as coaches, personally and with athletes, and as a way to have a subtle influence of those around them. If one hopes to understand how Christianity can impact athletes and coaches, it is important to recognize how religious practices, especially prayer, play a role in their lives.

Religion and Sport Psychology

Religion and religious practices have evidence of penetrating the field of sport psychology; however, religion is not as prevalent within the research as it is with our parent discipline of psychology (Watson & Nesti, 2005). This may make sense, as sport psychology

consulting may not always include, and some may say, typically does not include religion, as its

focus is on performance (C. Wrisberg, personal communication, March 15, 2012). However,

Storch, Koksky, Silvestri, and Storch (2001), and Storch, Roberti, Bravata, and Storch (2004)

have found that athletes were more religious than non-athletes. Balague (1999) has suggested

religion is oftentimes a helpful tool within a sport psychology consulting relationship, which

others have also encouraged (Czech et al., 2004; Egli, et al., in review; Nesti, 2004, 2011;

Watson & Nesti, 2005). One should be aware that these authors suggest including religious

practices when it is appropriate and recognize each sport psychology consulting relationship is

different.

Alongside spirituality, the dialogue of religion has found itself within cultural sport

psychology (Schinke & Hanrahan, 2009). This places "culture" as an integral part of being able

to understand oneself and others, which means being aware of one's race, ethnicity, gender,

sexuality, *spirituality* and *religion* as part of one's culture (Schinke, Hanrahan, & Catina, 2009).

Statements of cultural competency may be found within The Association for Applied Sport

Psychology (AASP) ethical guidelines (Watson, Etzel, & Loughran, 2012), and is encouraged by

others in the field (Kontos & Breland-Noble, 2002). Despite this inclusion, there is still a dearth

of research that focuses on culture, and the various aspects of culture, more specifically religion

(Schinke & Hanrahan, 2009). There are few sport psychology related textbooks that include

specific chapters dedicated to specific religions (Gilbourne & Andersen, 2011; Parry, Nesti, &

Watson, 2011; Parry, Robinson, Watson, & Nesti, 2007) and even fewer written from a specific

religious perspective (de la Peña, 2004). With few resources dedicated to the inclusion of

religion in sport psychology, it may lead one to ask: "What happens when a religious athlete who

fully integrates their faith into their sport seeks help from a sport psychology consultant (SPC)?" The answer, of course, is different for each individual; however, it is a question that SPCs should be asking themselves.

How religion and sport have come to interact has drastically changed between the times of the Ancient Greeks and now. Religion and sport are terms that each come with multiple definitions, which offer different consequences based on the definitions one chooses to accept. Christians, in particular, have viewed sport in various ways, such as the muscular Christian movement to promote a "manly" Christian (Putney, 2001), or today's athletes and coaches who struggle to make sense of their Christian values within competitive sport (Bennet et al., 2005; Stevenson, 1997). Unfortunately, one cannot say that the dominant culture of sport does cause dilemmas for Christians who participate, yet the Christian community may not recognize this as an issue (Hoffman, 2010). If these dilemmas are not recognized they may not be addressed appropriately, such as in helping an athlete negotiate questions they may have regarding how to make sense of Christianity within sport. The conflicts of religion and sport for athletes and coaches, and the potential benefits towards one's life and sporting experience are also lacking within sport psychology. Although small steps have been made to increase the awareness of religion in sport, there is significant room for growth in developing competent practices when working with religious athletes and coaches.

Summary

Research demonstrates that one may understand culture, faith, spirituality, religion, and sport through a variety of lenses. Due to the cultural sport psychology movement, actions towards cultural competence have been encouraged and theoretical frameworks developed

(Fisher et al., 2003, 2005; Fisher et al., 2009; Gill & Kampoff, 2010; Ryba & Wright, 2005).

Spirituality is one aspect that may be found under the umbrella of culture. Faith may divided into

two paradigms (Dykstra, 2005), yet the perspective of faith being understood as a general human

phenomenon has sparked the most research in terms of faith development (Fowler, 1981). One

form of spirituality and faith is religion. This has been a part of sport throughout history (Baker,

2007; Guttmann, 1992), which was demonstrated through the example of Christianity. In the

next chapter, I discuss the methodology that was used for this study.

CHAPTER 3

Method

In this chapter, I present my own positionality (Glesne, 2011). Hay (2005) defines this as one's "social, locational, and ideological placement relative to the research project or to other participants in it" (p. 290). This is followed by theoretical frameworks and the epistemological orientation I used in this study. Procedures for the study are also discussed. I close by addressing methodological issues for a qualitative research study.

Positionality

I am Caucasian, male, married, heterosexual, upper-middle-class, able-bodied, 27-year-old Christian. I am a third-year doctoral student in the Sport Psychology and Motor Behavior program at the University of Tennessee. My prior education includes a Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology, as well as a master's degree in sport psychology. While completing my master's degree, I had the opportunity to explore what I have found to be a passion of mine through both research and applied experiences – understanding how faith and sport interact with one another. Identifying myself as a Christian athlete my whole life, I searched for ways that would allow me to mesh both of these identities. For example, I often used verses to help motivate myself and understand different situations I encountered in sport. I also sought out various places that would allow me to enhance both my Christian faith and my athletic ability. One such group that I was involved with during various times in my life is the Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA).

I grew up in a Christian household where sports were an integral part of my life since I was first able to participate in them competitively. Around age 12, I attended a FCA basketball camp, which I left feeling somewhat disappointed with the skill level. I enjoyed the religious

content, but not the competition. At that point in my life, sports were much more important to me than my faith. This meant that I got more satisfaction out of playing sports than various Christian practices, such as going to church or reading the Bible. Although both sport and the Christian faith were always a part of my life, it was difficult for me to integrate the two. As stated above, attending a Christian basketball camp was not enjoyable for me; so, I spent every summer since I was in seventh grade going to week-long basketball camps that were often expensive, sometimes in a different state, and included athletes from around the globe. This was a privilege I had due the fact that I grew up in an upper-middle-class home that allowed me to pursue such endeavors. These camps were solely about basketball. Beginning my freshman year of high school I also would attend a week-long Christian-based camp through Young Life. Again, these camps were not cheap and were often in different states. Yet, those were never issues for my family. These camps had recreational sports, but these experiences were supposed to allow me to grow in my faith, not as an athlete. During this time in my life, although I saw myself as both a Christian and an athlete, I often segregated them from one another.

In fact, Christianity is a value-laden belief system that I did not begin to seriously participate in until I was roughly 16 years old. After deciding to live by the Christian faith in high school, many of my moral decisions such as choosing not to drink alcohol or experiment with drugs were influenced. My relationship with many of my friends and peers diminished as we were making different decisions when it came to how we spent our weekends. I saw life, including sports, through a different worldview from most of my friends and many of my peers.

The college I attended was a small, liberal-arts school. It was very expensive and for the first time in my life my parents were not sure if they would be able to afford an experience I

wanted to undertake. However, after many discussions that included me agreeing to take on some student loans, I chose Franklin and Marshall College (F&M). I felt like the school had a great psychology program, encouraged studying abroad, and had a beautiful campus. Although representatives of the school spoke highly about their diverse student body, it was mainly made up of affluent, Caucasian students. Despite this being the case, I had the opportunity to become close friends with many people who were very different from myself. This included students and faculty from countries outside the United States, people who practiced other religions, and openly gay men. Being able to have conversations and get to know members from each of these groups was very eye-opening and enjoyable for me. Needless to say, these conversations ultimately led to asking myself tough questions regarding my own faith and why I believed what I did during that time. I also had the opportunity to travel to Morocco and study abroad in Australia for a semester which placed me into new cultures. Although it may sound cliché, traveling truly did expand my worldview, as living in Australia proved to be very different than Pennsylvania. Again, I encountered many who were very different from myself with whom I became friends; we all wanted to learn more about each other and welcomed questions of any kind. Australia was also the first opportunity I had to take a class in sport psychology, which ultimately changed my career plans after F & M.

It was not until college when I chose play basketball that there was an FCA group available that I enjoyed. This group provided me a place where I could relate to other athletes who ascribed to the same faith as me, which was comforting. Plus, the leader of the group cared more about who I was spiritually, which had now become the most significant aspect of my life. However, due to the small size of my school and lack of interest from the athletic community,

the groupsoon faded. It was an experience I wish I were able to enjoy throughout my college career.

Despite the FCA not being on campus, the integration of my faith into sport was always there as I engaged in prayer and reading the Bible daily. During my freshman year I joined a men's Christian bible study group that met every week; this truly challenged my faith to grow and allowed me to ask many difficult questions. I participated in this group every year of college and acted as president of this organization my senior year. It is also important to note that my faith had a role in my decision to stop playing basketball my junior year as my team was not one that placed high values on character and integrity. For example, once a year each varsity team on campus was involved in a community service day where each team member would participate. However, the men's basketball team, which had roughly 20 members, would only have five of us (in a "good" year) help out. These events were not encouraged by the coaches or thought to be important by team leaders. The team I was a part of was also known for drug use; some players came to practice under the influence of drugs. Basketball had always been a part of my life and was a big part of my identity; however, from my perspective it was not the most important piece of my life. I played basketball because I enjoyed playing and learning the game, encouraging others, and being part of a team. When I struggled to enjoy any of these, I knew it was time to move on.

My own personal faith and the influence of sport in my life have led me to an interest in making sense of these two experiences. As a Christian athlete, it was difficult at times to understand my faith within the dominant, ego-oriented culture of sport; however, I was able to best cope by understanding my experience in sport through my Christian faith. It is also

important to note that I played at a Division III college where there were no athletic scholarships; so, sports were not emphasized as much as they are at Division I universities where athletes might be recruited to come to that particular school based solely on their athletic abilities. Therefore, my intention of playing at this level was secondary to attending a rigorous academic college and I did not see myself playing competitively after college.

Instead of pursuing a graduate degree in clinical psychology, I chose to enter a master's degree program in sport psychology. I was accepted into multiple programs; however, I decided to attend Georgia Southern University (GSU), as "the South" was unfamiliar territory for me and it had a good reputation within the sport psychology community. This proved to be a unique opportunity for several reasons. The first was because of financial reasons. I was given an assistantship and tuition was waved, which was important because my parents would not be paying for anything past my undergraduate degree. From an early age, our parents told us that they would pay for college, but anything after that would be our responsibility. In lieu of this process I had worked in landscaping every year during college, which allowed me to save over ten thousand dollars for graduate school. This was possible because I did not need to spend it on anything other than rent while at F & M. Therefore, I did not have to take out any loans for my master's degree.

In addition, I was able to travel extensively during my two years in the program to do sport psychology consulting. Both the department I was a part of and the graduate school funded students very well. I also had enough money from my savings to go on any trips that students were able to take if they paid "out of pocket." This included trips to Louisville and Utah for conferences, Key West twice to help lead health behavior change courses, Trinidad and Tobago

twice to consult and do mission work, and Europe to work with international teams and coaches from various countries. All of these experiences were not as readily available to my cohorts. Each of these trips provided new cultural experiences as well as professional experience in consulting with teams and individuals related to sport performance.

Teaching was another endeavor I was exposed to at GSU. I recall sitting in a mentors office at F & M telling him that I would never want to teach; "I want to help people!" I told him. However, after being able to teach some classes in my master's degree program, I realized that I loved teaching and how it allowed me an opportunity to help countless individuals. This may sound surprising, but for the first time in my life, I realized that simply sitting down one-on-one with another individual is not the only way you can impact his/her life. My career path then changed from being a clinical psychologist to becoming an academic in the field of sport psychology. My goal now is to become a tenured sport psychology college professor.

My Christian faith also grew during this time period in new ways. One important aspect to mention was that my advisor at GSU was a Christian who ultimately encouraged me to include my faith within my consulting and research if I thought it would be beneficial to the athlete. Prior to this I had always avoided the topic of faith within academia, as any issue regarding spirituality in my undergraduate degree was discouraged. I also never wanted to force my faith on others, which made me sensitive to discussing it. However, at GSU I was able to accept this aspect of my identity as integrated into all aspects of my being, which included my academic and professional endeavors. I was able to ask academic questions regarding issues of faith that were salient to sport psychology and to work with an advisor who had similar beliefs. During this time, I was mentored by him, and also by two other older men in the church I

attended while at GSU. This was the first time in my life where I had others pouring themselves into me, whereas I was typically pouring myself into others. I had a healthier balance of people who mentored me as well as those I mentored. My approach to everything I did was much different than before because I had people to encourage me in who I was as a Christian. For example, it was at GSU where I realized my next step in life would entail attending a doctoral program that would help me continue to learn to integrate both faith and sport. The University of Tennessee (UT) proved to be the best fit, even though I seriously considered getting a PhD at a Divinity school.

One specific traveling experience during my time at GSU proved to be very enlightening to me in terms of my race. This was my trip to Trinidad and Tobago. On both trips, I lived with a family who had an Indian background. Overall, Trinidad is very culturally diverse and I was able to learn about new religions and spiritualities, food, and sport. However, this trip was the first time in my life that I had ever felt my "whiteness." Wherever we went I tended to be the only Caucasian person; I felt like people were staring at me. I even had multiple encounters with random people coming up to me and asking me where I was from. This led me to ask the family I stayed with what this meant. They told me that if you are White and in Trinidad and Tobago it typically brings a couple of assumptions. The first is that I was either American or European; the second was that I was wealthy. This surprised me. Never in my life had I experienced a place where my race was not the majority or where my socioeconomic status was highlighted.

My newly felt "whiteness" was still not completely understood as I started my doctoral studies at UT. In a graduate counseling class there was a day where we were asked to fill out an identity wheel. One aspect of my wheel that I left blank was race and ethnicity. In discussing this

exercise, I realized that those were aspects of my identity that I did not initially see as salient. Then, I also had the opportunity to take a Critical Race Theory course as well as an ethics course that helped me navigate this "new" whitness that I finally accepted. I had never thought about my racial and economic privilege before this time.

Another component of my identity that I have learned more about has been my sexual orientation. I identify as both heterosexual and Christian, which I acknowledge comes with a stereotype I am not proud of. If I look back back on my life I admit that I was homophobic. I did not fully understand the experience of someone who identifies as gay, and I cannot say that I do today; however, I am moving towards fighting my own homophobia. Because of the environment I grew up which was not very diverse but was very conservative, I was not exposed to any gay culture. It was not until college that I first met and befriended someone who was gay.

I have also had some negative experiences with sexual orientation since living in the South. While in Georgia and Tennessee, I have encountered numerous anti-gay Christians who speak in a public setting (and they usually have a sign and megaphone) about the damnation of homosexuals. Whenever I see such people, I am typically with close friends who do not ascribe to Christianity but know me well enough to know that I do. This led to some amazing and challenging conversations that pushed me to see this in a new light. Those are positives I can see coming from those experiences. I have also had the privilege of speaking with a close friend who recently came out as gay. Although I recognize I will never fully understand his/her life, I can say I am empathetic, open, and loving.

These experiences and layers of my being have ultimately influenced my research. I live by the Christian faith and see sport through this perspective as a student, researcher, consultant,

and athlete; therefore, I bring into my context very strong personal values. I did not disclose my own personal beliefs within my interviews, but for those that did disclose to me that they are Christian I was able to relate and understand their "language" on a more personal level. However, it was important for me to recognize that there are different understandings within this same group. Christianity has a spectrum of beliefs with which one could align oneself. It was also imperative that I was open to how others understand spirituality, as it may be very different from my own understanding. This is true in my everyday life, as well. I truly sought to place myself in the participants' shoes.

I also have my own experiences working with athletes who strongly identify with the Christian faith that could have influenced my research. It was necessary for me to be aware of my own biases and recognize that my own personal experiences are different from those participating in the context I was seeking to understand. The participants are at a different level professionally and have significantly more overall experience, which includes sport psychology consulting. Therefore, although I have my own approaches to working with such athletes and coaches, I recognize that my consulting philosophy is not the only one.

Analyzing my data for this project included my own biases of what spirituality entails, how to handle it in a consulting relationship, and beliefs about training one should have to handle such issues. I have conducted three other qualitative projects in which I was able to practice analyzing data while being aware of my own biases and using tactics to strengthen the truthfulness of my project. Two of these three projects were done during my doctoral coursework with both focusing on faith and sport. Therefore, I recognize how easy it can be for one's beliefs to influence analysis, especially when those beliefs are very personal. I also had more knowledge

into how researchers have understood faith development; yet, I believe spiritual journeys to be very different. Also, having had the opportunity to travel and entertaining many spiritual and religious questions from others different than my own values, this is a project I thoroughly enjoyed taking part in. It was necessary for me to be objective and empathetic in seeking to understand others' experiences related to sport psychology consultants' engagement with spirituality in their consulting practice.

Theoretical Frameworks

The first theoretical framework I used revolves around faith development theories. James Fowler's (1981) stages of faith model have been foundational for research and application for faith development (Heywood, 2008). As previously reviewed, Fowler's (1981) model is made up of seven stages; they are hierarchical and follow an ordered progression. There is also a beginning and an end. It is necessary to mention that Fowler understands faith as a human universal, whereas other theorists believe faith cannot happen without God (Dykstra, 1986, Westerhoff, 1976). Dykstra (2005) believes that how one comprehends and defines faith will ultimately fall within one of these two paradigms. Some scholars have disagreed with Fowler's (1981) model (Dykstra, 1986; Heywood, 2008; McDargh, 2001; Streib, 2001, 2005). At this point in time, there is no universal accepted model of faith development. As I hoped to gain insight into how sport psychology consultants understand faith development in themselves and in others, it was important to hear how they comprehended faith and how it matured, if at all. These are questions not found within sport psychology literature; however, small steps have been taken by researchers to address spirituality (Watson & Nesti, 2005).

Watson and Nesti (2005) have attempted to bring the discussion of spirituality into sport psychology. More specifically, Watson and Nesti (2005) offer how spirituality may be involved in mental skills training and a counseling relationship, as well as in relation to the flow experience. How scholars in our field define spirituality is also discussed by these authors. Spirituality can be understood in a variety of ways (Koenig, 2008), but most relevant to this study was be how sport psychology consultants (AASP-CCs) comprehended this term for themselves and how this influenced their performance consulting, if at all. Therefore, the review of spirituality by Watson and Nesti (2005) was used as another framework. More recently, cultural sport psychology researchers (Schinke & Hanrahan, 2009) have placed a focus on acknowledging various aspects of one's cultural identity which includes spirituality; this research may be useful in comprehending the role of spirituality in sport psychology consulting.

These frameworks were primarily used to help develop the semi-structured interview guide, as I had an interest in learning how consultants comprehend faith and spirituality and their development. This potentially provided perspective into how one interacted when spirituality was encountered within their performance consulting relationships. The framworks were also used a lens to connect the findings of the study with what is previously known.

Epistemological Orientation

Crotty (1998) says, "ontology is the study of being" and is how one understands "what is" in the world, whereas epistemology is "understanding what it means to know" (p. 10). Although I feel as though I have an understanding of where I lie with respect to these notions, I struggle to place myself in just a single camp when it comes to paradigms. Guba and Lincoln (1998) state that the ontology of constructivism comes down to the realities of local and specific

environments. I believe this is true in my own understanding of my interest in spirituality within sport psychology consulting. Spirituality, as well as sport psychology consulting, are understood and practiced all over the world; however, what that looks like for each person in different locations at different historical time periods will be different. For example, if one were to compare an encounter of spirituality in a sport psychology consulting relationship in Georgia with one in Oregon I believe there would be differences. This represents a regional difference, which may also represent a cultural difference. Although I believe there are variations across cultures, this could also be the case within cultures. Spirituality or religious ideas can be very individualistic in terms of how one grows in his/her comprehension of a higher power or a god. Using Christianity as an example, this may entail how one conceptualizes and makes meaning of the life of Jesus Christ in one's own life. These thoughts have led me to believe a more constructivist methodological approach best represents my own thinking.

Constructivist approaches lend themselves to using naturalistic qualitative research methods, which is done by interviewing and/or observing participants in a setting that is comfortable or familiar to them (Hatch, 2002). Patton (2002) states that naturalistic inquiry "minimizes investigator manipulation of the study setting and places no prior constraints on what the outcomes of the research will be" (p. 39). In this study, I used interviews as the primary data collection strategy; this is appropriate for the constructivist paradigm (Hatch, 2002). More specifically, a semi-structured interview approach was used, as there were certain questions I wanted to ask each participant. These types of interviews entail a set of questions from an interview guide on a particular topic, which are followed by probing questions to gain further insight into what has been said (Roulston, 2010). Probes are important as they "are used to

deepen the response to a question, increase the richness and depth of responses, and give cues to the interviewee about the level of response that is desired" (Patton, 2002, p. 372). Although each participant was asked the same questions, each individual response was different due to the nature of these questions (Roulston, 2010).

Bracketing Interview

Prior to the study – and after IRB approval – I engaged in a bracketing interview. This entailed being interviewed by another experienced Ph.D. student qualitative interviewer using the semi-structured interview guide that I would use with participants. The process allowed me to investigate my presuppositions regarding the study topic (Roulston, 2010). After the interview was completed the same thematic analysis approach was used with the data to help sensitize myself to my own experiences. Although extensive steps were taken to bracket "out" my biases, as Pollio, Henley, and Thompson (1997) state, it is never fully possible to completely suspend or bracket out one's knowledge of the world.

I found that my experiences of spirituality within consulting were largely based on Christianity. This included consulting with the athletes I worked with during my Ph.D. training. I have included Christian prayer, role models, and scripture within sessions. Also, I have experienced different levels of faith maturity in the athletes I have consulted with. Spirituality to me is about finding meaning and living in community; this is based on my own faith, Christianity. However, I do not believe this is reflective of everyone's understanding. I respect others' beliefs. Faith is about trust, loyalty, and being comfortable with the unknown. It develops as one grows, experiences life, and asks questions. There is no end to its development and it is constantly changing. For me, the terms spirituality, faith, and religion were often used

interchangeably. Because I am athlete-centered, I do not find my identity as a Christian interfering with my work as a consultant. It is about the athlete and one needs to be respectful of who they are. Reflecting on my education, I feel fortunate to have been encouraged to not be aftraid of spirituality within sport psychology; however, I have never had a course that addresses this particular topic. Overall, I found the interview more difficult than I had expected, as defining various terms proved to be harder to explain at times. I was thankful to have been asked the questions. No changes were made to the interview guide after the bracketing interview.

Participants

This study consisted of nine participants who were certified consultants through the Association of Applied Sport Psychology (CC-AASP) and who had addressed issues of spirituality within their consulting. Descriptive information about the participants may be found in Table 1.

Table 1. Description of Participants

#	Participant	Gender	Race	Degree/Training	Age	Years CC-AASP
1.	Pat	Male	Caucasian	Ph.D./Sport Science	> 50	> 20
2.	Joe	Male	Caucasian	Ph.D./Sport Science	> 60	> 20
3.	Howard	Male	Caucasian	Ph.D./Clinical Psych	> 60	N/A
4.	Mitch	Male	Caucasian	Ph.D. /Sport Science	> 30	> 10
5.	Monica	Female	Black	Psy.D./Clinical Psych	> 30	< 5
6.	Austin	Male	Caucasian	Ph.D./Sport Science	> 30	< 5
7.	Natalie	Female	African	Ph.D./Sport Science	> 40	> 5

| 8. | Scott | Male | Caucasian | Ph.D./Sport Science | > 30 | < 5 |
| 9. | Paul | Male | Caucasian | Ph.D./Sport Science | > 60 | > 15 |

The sample included seven males and two females with a range of 31-66 years of age. The majority of the participants were Caucasian and American. Seven consultants' primary training was in sport science while two were clinical psychologists; eight had earned a Ph.D. and one had a Psy.D. Three consultants identified as affiliating with a branch of Christianity, two affiliated with Judaism, three with no religion, and one left the question of religion blank. Length of practicing sport psychology ranged from 5-32 years, whereas years certified (AASP-CC) ranged from 1 month to 24 years.

Procedures

As previously stated, the study received IRB approval from the University of Tennessee. Potential interviewees were initially contacted using purposeful sampling via an e-mail post to the Sport Psychology listserve (sportpsy@temple.edu) (Appendix A). The e-mail included the criteria for participating in the study and asked for those who were interested in participating to respond to me backchannel, as to avoid the listserve receiving all responses. Due to lack of responses, changes to the requirements of participation were made; participants were allowed to participate if they were certified for any amount of time versus five years. The appropriate changes were made with the approval of the IRB office. In addition, individual e-mails were sent to consultants listed on the AASP website who were likely to attend the conference. Those who met the criteria and were willing to participate were asked if they would be attending the 2012

annual Association of Applied Sport Psychology conference in Atlanta, Georgia, as this provided an opportunity to conduct face-to-face interviews with professionals from various geographic regions.

Snowball sampling was used once the intial contact had taken place, which entails getting references and new contacts from the participants in the study (Patton, 2002). Once someone agreed to participate he/she were asked if he/she knew of anyone who may meet the criteria for the study. Those contacts were then pursued. This is because although the listserve email resulted in numerous responses, I did not receive any that met the criteria for inclusion into the study. Four participants were initially individually contacted and invited to participate. Three additional particpants were gained from snowball sampling at the conference. Further, two more participants were selected due to personal connections with either myself or my advisor. A date, time, and location were set at their convenience. Face-to-face interviews were conducted at the conference.

Participants were asked to read and sign the informed consent form prior to the start of the interview (see Appendix B). Each interviewee was also asked to select a pseudonym in place of his/her actual name. Each semi-structured interview lasted between 30-88 minutes. Interviews focused on understanding spirituality and how it may enter into a sport psychology consulting relationship. They also included demographic questions (see Appendix C for interview and demographic questions).

Each interview was recorded and then transcribed. Transcriptions were then sent back to the participants and they were able to examine what was said and change or add any additional thoughts. Only two consultants responded with any changes; they were mostly editorial. Once

results were finalized they were sent to the participants. Five consultants responded. Most

responded with general feedback, such as they were in agreement with the metaphor used, while

one also included some content questions. No changes were made.

Participants' audiorecordings as well as transcripts were stored in an encrypted computer

file where they were also password protected. Then, they were kept in a secure cabinet after

transcription. All notes during the interviews and demographic information were also stored

where only I had access to the data. All copies of the audio computer file was deleted after the

interviews were transcribed.

Data Analysis

The approach that was used for the data analysis was adopted from Bogdan and Biklen

(2007). Data included all of the pages of transcribed data as well as analytic memos and

interviews. Saldaña (2009) describes analytic memos as "a place to 'dump your brain' about the

participants, phenomenon, or process under investigation by thinking and thus writing and thus

thinking even more about them" (p. 32). These were used prior to and after each interview, while

reading through transcripts, and during data analysis (See Appendix D for example). These were

used in place of what others have referred to as research journals (Hatch, 2002).

Data analysis proceeded as follows. First, all the data were organized. Interview pages

were numbered chronologically by the date they were collected. Like materials were stored

together; all analytic memos were kept together and all interview transcripts were kept together.

Transcripts were printed out, while analytic memos were all kept as electronic files.

Data were then read twice through independently by myself as well as a research team to

get a fuller understanding of the data before initial coding began. The research group was made

up of my advisor as well as other graduate students who had training in qualitative research; each was required to sign a confidentiality statement (see Appendix E). During this time, each team member written preliminary codes on the transcripts independently. These codes were then modified while reading though the data once again, which meant new codes were added, old ones were dropped, and some were kept in place. It is important to note that this first trial was done to "test" the codes, as they changed throughout the coding process. The first series of coding that was used was in vivo codes to stay as close as possible to the data, while the final series of coding included descriptive methods (Saldaña, 2009). Once a list of codes was formulated, it was important to shorten the list and focus on appropriate categories. Codes were ultimately fixed and placed into different levels of categories – major codes and subcodes. Major codes were more general and included various attitudes, activities, and behaviors; subcodes were smaller categories of the major codes. Once these codes fit the data well, the research group came together to discuss emerging themes, discovered independently from each other. Early themes were then agreed upon via consensus.

Methodological Issues

Quality and Credibility

With any type of research one must be able to address issues of quality and credibility regarding the overall process used. As a qualitative researcher, Roulston (2010) uses the term "quality" to represent multiple terms such as "validity, reliability, rigor, trustworthiness, credibility, transferability, and plausibility" (p. 83). How one distinguishes the terminology used to understand quality of one's work from within a qualitative paradigm is dependent on one's perceptions of credibility (Patton, 2002). The criteria set for this project come from a

constructivist framework. Before this discussion takes place one must understand the notion of credibility.

Patton (2002) discusses three elements to the credibility of qualitative inquiry: (a) rigorous methods; (b) credibility of the researcher; and (c) philosophical belief in the value of qualitative inquiry. Rigorous methods means that high quality data will come from a systematic approach to the overall research process. The credibility of the researcher is dependent upon one's experience and training, while the philosophical belief in the value of qualitative inquiry demonstrates an appreciation and understanding of such thinking. Each element may be found within this paper in the positionality statement and in the epistemological orientation I described.

Glesne (2011) states that identifying specific criteria from a constructivist perspective may be difficult as one cannot fully ensure something is "true" or "accurate" (p. 49). However, there is common language within this perspective to help distinguish it from others. Such language and criteria used includes acknowledging subjectivity, trustworthiness, authenticity, triangulation and reflexivity (Patton, 2002). Acknowledging subjectivity takes into account one's bias, which is an important methodological issue one must explore. In this study, I underwent a bracketing inverview, reflected on my own positionality, engaged in member checks, and used a research group (see Appendix E) to help navigate this issue.

Trustworthiness is a term that may be understood as rigor, which also emphasizes credibility (Patton, 2002). Creswell (1998) describes eight procedures that help increase trustworthiness of qualitative projects. They include the following: (a) prolonged engagement and persistent observation; (b) triangulation (or cystalilization); (c) peer review and deberiefing; (d) negative case analysis; (e) clarification of researcher bias; (f) member checking; (g) rich,

thick description; and (h) external audit. Glesne (2011) states that all procedures do not need to take place in every study. They were all utilized in this project to enhance trustworthiness.

Authenticity refers to an emphasis of natural inquiry (studying a phenomenon in a real world setting) and includes "reflexive consciousness about one's own perspective, appreciation for the perspectives of others, and fairness in depicting construction in the values that undergird them" (Patton, 2002, p. 546). As the participants and myself constructed the interview experiences together, multiple perspectives allowed for a more holistic understanding. This process of creating authenticity of experiences occured throughout the entirety of the project.

Triangulation is a commonly used strategy to help with trustworthiness and credibility (Roulston, 2010). Methods and analyst triangulation were forms utilized (Patton, 2002). Methods triangulation included multiple interviews that were collected and compared, while analyst triangulation included having other researchers working on the same data in order to help check my biases. These were especially important during data analysis.

Lastly, I define reflexivity. This includes "understanding how one's own experiences and background affect what one understands and how one acts in the world, including acts of inquiry" (Patton, 2002, p. 546). Reflexivity was explored using a positionality statement, and by writing analytic memos.

Ethical Considerations

This research was done under the banner of the University of Tennessee, which means the research design and procedures went through the Institutional Review Board (IRB). IRB forms included appropriate guidelines for the project; however, it was the responsibility of the researcher to follow through on such procedures. Because the study involved interviewing others

it was important to discuss informed consent. Basic tenets of informed consent included the following: (a) "that participation is voluntary;" (b) intention to do no harm; and (c) "that they may freely choose to stop participation at any point in the study" (Glesne, 2011, p. 166). Expanding on these included addressing issues of privacy and confidentiality, deception, reciprocity, expectations, and cultural considerations (Glesne, 2011; Hatch, 2002). The informed consent designed for this particular study covered these potential issues (See Appendix B). Although there are ethical considerations regarding human subjects, one should also go beyond these concerns (Hatch, 2002). One such way these ethical concerns were addressed was by answering a series of questions developed by Hatch (2002) that were designed to help researchers, like myself, to be aware of various ethical issues I may encounter in relation to the research context.

Procedural Considerations

There are numerous aspects of an interview study that I prepared for in order to provide the best opportunity for fewer mistakes. Because consent for the study was initially sent out via e-mail to an online listserve, members could have accidentally responded to the entire listserve rather than to me. So, it was important to emphasize and highlight the importance of paying attention to such details, as it could have hindered issues of confidentiality. All who responded did so without replying to the entire listserve. The second issue regarding recruiting participants was that not all AASP-CCs may be a part of the listserve or read each e-mail, as multiple e-mails are sent out daily. So, as previously mentioned, individual e-mails were sent out to a variety of consultants listed on the AASP website. Although this was the main source of recruitment, snowball sampling was also utilized once initial interviews begin.   Prior to the interviews

themselves it was important to prepare for the interview. This included having all the appropriate

forms, and learning about particular participants. For example, if the participant was a well-

known consultant and researcher it was beneficial to review their work (Roulston, 2010).

Recording an interview was another step in which I took precautions. Hatch (2002) says it is

important to test the recording device prior to the interview to make sure it is working properly.

This was done. Lastly, once the interviews were recorded and were ready for transcription it was

important to make copies of the files in case they were lost or erased before transcription was

completed (Roulston, 2010). Saving the files onto my computer, an external jump drive, and an

iPod was done; as a result, no files were lost or erased prior to transcription. All of the methods

and procedures were carried out. The next chapter includes the results of this process.

CHAPTER 4

Results

The purpose of this study was to explore how AASP-certified consultants experienced spirituality within a performance consulting relationship. Guiding research questions included: (a) How do experienced CC-AASPs understand and define spirituality and faith?; and (b) In what ways does spirituality enter into their sport psychology consulting relationships?

I interviewed nine AASP-certified consultants. Data analysis of the semi-structured interviews was conducted using an approach adopted from Bogdan and Biklin (2007), which led to the emergence of one major metaphor as well as four themes. The major metaphor was *The Consulting Relationship as a House.* The four major themes were spirituality as a: (a) *Portal*; (b) *Athlete-Driven*; (c) *Coping Mechanism*; and (d) *Christianity as the Norm*. The metaphor of *The Consulting Relationship as Building a House* is described as the major themes are discussed. However, first I present information regarding how results relate to Guiding Research Question #1: What is spirituality and faith?

Guiding Research Question #1: How Do Experienced CC-AASPs Understand and Define Spirituality and Faith?

Pat. Pat was certified over twenty years ago. He defined spirituality the following way:

> I define spirituality as kind of like an inner peace within yourself. When you have to draw on will power. I think that when people really have to dig deep it's the spirit within…I think it really cuts across any kind of religion. It's the same thing. There's an inner sense of the core that we tap into to find the strength to move forward.

When asked how Pat understands faith he said:

I look at faith as an inner belief, which is different from confidence…I think there is a

difference between being confident and having faith. Where is the faith based? A lot of

it is in the propration. The practicing. The sense of repetition. The courage to move

forward And there's an inner knowing that I paid my dues. I'm prepared. I'm ready to

go out and do battle. So there's a faith in yourself. There may be a faith in teammates,

maybe a faith in method.

Joe. Joe was certified over twenty years ago. He said:

I have a very broad definition of spirituality and spirituality to me basically means having

a sense of purpose…I keep going to the broad context of it's about relationships. It's

about connection and the connection is my spirit with your spirit. My energy with your

energy and finding that bond.

He spoke of understanding faith in comparison to spirituality:

I see spirituality as much more of a process. Faith is more of a hope. Faith is more of a

religious thing. I don't have faith in my spirituality, I know it! I know when I'm

connected with the person. Faith is I believe I am, I believe it.

Howard. Howard did not say how long he had been certified. He said the following about

spirituality:

Spirituality is believing in the metaphysical. There's more than just the physical world.

Spirituality usually has to do, in regard to the faith, that there is a higher power there.

Christianity is one form of spirituality. All religions have some form of spirituality, but

spirituality is that broader umbrella of what people believe regardless of doctrine.

When discussing faith he said, "faith is the fact of do you believe in a higher power?" He continued to speak about it by differentiating it from spirituality: "Faith usually has to do with this is what I believe. If I had to say there was a distinction, faith is hanging their hat on more of a defined value system for themselves."

Mitch. Mitch has been certified for over ten years. He understood spirituality this way:

> I would define it as the feeling of some sort of connection beyond this life. That's there's more to the physical presence that we have here in front of us…some sort of connection, higher at times, at times it would be a higher being or worship of that being. But I think spirituality would be that feeling of connection and maybe higher purpose beyond the pass of day day to day life. So a higher level metaphysical connection, some sort of interconnectivity that is different.

He described faith as the "absence of doubt." Mitch further explained his understanding of faith: "So to me, tis' the absence of, allowing this luxury of the absence of doubt. I'm not worried about this competition. It's in God's hands. It's a very calming thing, I think, for many athletes."

Monica. Monica has been certified for less than five years. When asked how she defines spirituality she said the following:

> For me, it's a belief in God. It's a belief in God and the principles that go along with Christianity. When I think about spirituality, in general, I think it can be broadly defined. Just people believing in some higher power. The spirituality piece is when you believe in some higher being. Something outside of yourself, above and beyond yourself is kinda influencing and impacting your life.

In discussing her understanding of faith she said:

> Faith, to me, is beliving in what you can't see. Whether that's something tangible, believing that it will happen. Believing that something will happen even though you can't see how it will happen. Just having that undying, unshakable, unconditional belief that it will happen.

Austin. Austin has been certified for less than five years. He described spirituality here:

> Spirituality is acknowledging some connection to someone or something that is more than maybe what we can tangibly obviously see or rationalize or conceptualize. That there's this belief that there's someone or something else in our lives that plays an important role in terms of guiding us and protecting us. I can see it being void of religion…I think someone that's spiritual might define that or I might define that as something tha'ts a bit more, a little bit less prescribed, but still has this underlying idea that they're not along. And that there is a belief in some kind of higher power or authority or concept that is difficult to describe, I think, but that it's there.

Austin described faith:

> I think that's a term that's used in so many different contexts. Having faith in somebody in terms of when they mean trusting that person is going to do their part. I think when it comes to religion and spirituality I think of faith as having trust and a belief in something. Whather that's religion or something else that maybe fits more of how I would describe spirituality. But some kind of connection and tie to something bigger or larger than themselves.

Natalie. Natalie has been certified for over five years. She said, "[spirituality] is about my existence" and it is "my journey through life." She also noted:

> Spirituality is a part of who I am so it's always there. I work with some of the most elite athletes in the world so spirituality must be a part of it, as far as my approach or my practice is concerned.

Faith was described as the following:

> Well, for me, faith is about getting into that realization that you're part of a living system. When we connect, when we become more aware and understand the importance of the wind and the air or he breath, which sustains life, then we would realize that we have faith…faith is an awareness.

Scott. Scott has been certified for less than five years. He understood spirituality as:

> Spirituality in a general sense has always been just believing in something that's either beyond or above yourself or even within yourself, however you perceive that. There is something there that gives you an inner strength to deal with life, deal with adversity…just recognizing and realizing, at least believing that there's something greater than yourself.

Scott explained faith this way:

> Faith might be more of a religious term, that's the way I have looked at it. And when I think religion I think more organized. I don't want to say less personalized spirituality because it can be both very personal, as well as more public, obviously, in terms of attending church services, being part of a larger community. But certainly to me, faith is, I attribute that with religion.

Paul. Paul has been certified for over fifteen years. He said the following about spirituality:

> I define it more in terms of the relationship I have with God. However, when I want to define God I do so more in a Judeo-Christian tradition, and primarily personified in Jesus. So it is more of a relationship than an adherence to some doctrine. And this relationship is rooted in my experience of God as personified in Jesus.

In discussing faith, Paul said:

> Faith is about trust. Trusting what it is that you believe even when the evidence may not be all there. And I think again, my faith is centered in the person of Jesus, the historical Jesus.

Both spirituality and faith were defined by each consultant in different ways. Next, the second guiding research question is addressed.

Guiding Research Question #2: In What Ways Does Spirituality Enter Into Their Sport Psychology Consulting Relationships?

Metaphor. It was evident, however, that consultants felt that building relationships with athletes was an integral part of their work. The metaphor of building a "house" represented this process. According to their words, trust began by digging a solid "foundation" and recognizing that there were both doors and windows representing "portals" into athletes' experiences and their use of spirituality. The process of building a house was led by the values of the athletes, who chose the "fabric" and "colors" of the house, or how much to let the consultant in on their relationship with spirituality.

Theme 1: Portal

The theme of a *Portal* represents the doors and windows of the house, the house serving as the developing relationship between consultant and athlete. Portals represent windows into athletes' values and their use of spirituality. In terms of spirituality, the placement of that door is different for each individual, if it is there at all. At times it is a front door, which is the most natural path used to enter the house; it is the most visible. Others placed this door at the back of the house where it was only used for personal experiences, not shared with the consultant or used in sport. Still others may place this door within the house and it is not entered until the resources within that room are needed. In the same way, windows are in the house to allow us to see inside and provide light for the house. Windows represent being able to see the athletes' purposes and truths.

Austin reflected on an athlete who first made this connection: "I think this is the first time where [he/she's] really tried to make that connection and utilize [his/her spirituality] as a portal for [his/her] sport." Howard used the metaphor of the window to understand how people describe the divine:

> When faith or religion goes down, people worship the window. And the window is not
>
> the divine. The window is a human's effort to show what the divine is…And I really
>
> make it a point not to get hung up on the window.

Howard suggested that it is not what the window looks like that one should be focusing on, but what one sees through the window that should be the focal point. In discussing these portals, consultants described three subthemes: (a) *language;* (b) *taboo*; and (c) *broad understanding*.

Language. Many of the consultants spoke of *language* as playing a vital role in understanding the athlete and being able to connect with him/her. This is especially true when the athlete brought in spirituality lexicon. Howard spoke of using the language of the athlete as a way to connect with the athlete's values: "The language of faith was extremely important and so I always try to speak the client's language." He used the example of working with a devout Christian:

> This woman is a very devout Christian. That's part of what she does and so there's times that I'll use the language I have of the scripture, songs, whatever – use that. To me, it is a way of speaking her language and helping her have…they're cues. They're triggers that are very, very meaningful.

This refers to listening to the athlete's words and making them a part of the conversation so it is reflective of the athlete's experiences, as different individuals understand spirituality differently. Recognizing an athlete may bring spirituality into a relationship, Mitch thought the language of spirituality should be part of one's "arsenal" and compares it to working with someone from a sport with which they are unfamiliar:

> I think any consultant should have in their arsenal some of that language so that if they need to get into a conversation with someone who's really religious, spiritual, that they can then talk the language of spirituality just like they would, you know, you got to know a new sport. You got to know that language. You got to observe, and you got to go to church and watch some videos online.

Austin made the same comparison. He said, "In some ways similar to working with a sport that you didn't necessarily play yourself. Can you still be effective? Absolutely. Does it take a little

bit more work on your part to be effective? Absolutely. Do your homework." Thus, there is a

sense that consultants not only listen and use the athletes' own language, but they also become

more knowledgeable on such topics. Pat suggested that an awareness of ethics and knowing

one's role was also important:

> "There's a core ethics that guides our practice. We don't want to overstep our

boundaries." When some form of language of spirituality is present, consultants acknowledged

this is oftentimes an ethical question of whether one is competent and comfortable to interact

with such individuals. For performance consultants like Mitch, their role is to focus on

performance:

> I think we have a duty to do no harm, too…they didn't come here for spirituality
>
> counseling probably. I think there's some ethical stuff there you have to sort out as a
>
> consultant, but I would not feel comfortable going there because that's not what they're
>
> asking me to do.

As Scott also suggested: "I don't ever think that an athlete really seeks me out wanting to

necessarily talk about religion in depth. I think that's why they go to church. That's why they

might talk to a priest." It is important to note that none of the consultants believed that an

athlete's spirituality ever conflicted with their role as a consultant and their work together. They

communicated that they would refer out to someone more qualified if it ever got to a place they

thought would "overstep boundaries." This is especially true when the spiritual language came in

the form of religion. In addition, although it may be an ethical issue that one must consider, it

was widely agreed upon that it is a language and a topic in the field of sport psychology

considers "taboo."

Taboo. A second subtheme under *Portal* was *taboo*. Spirituality, in any vein, is a topic not discussed and almost forbidden from conversation. It was never directly encountered within the consultants' sport psychology training. As Monica stated, "When I first started out I wouldn't talk about it. It was one of those taboo subjects." Natalie agreed and said, "To be candid, sport psychology doesn't prepare you for spirituality. That's a taboo concept. And for many reasons that I can very well understand." Scott also considered spirituality as a "sensitive topic" (p. 6) and "outside the box." Howard spoke of his lack of training in spirituality in the following way:

> Why is faith, why isn't faith, spirituality, belief, why is that, what's the taboo? Because people will talk about having sex with animals in the town square at high noon. As a psychologist, you could talk to people about them having sex with animals in the time square at high noon. That was okay to talk about. You could talk about fetishes and everything like that, but, well, what do you believe? Do you believe in a higher power? That used to be no, no, no. That's taboo.

Of interest was the fact that consultants who were clinically trained spoke of deliberately "inquiring" about spiritual and/or religious beliefs during an intake interview. Others spoke about learning about an athlete's spiritual or religious background early on; however, it was not a question directly asked, but a salient aspect of their identity that they waited until the athlete shared.

Because it was a taboo subject to discuss in training, many of the consultants relied on their own personal and professional experiences and their own understanding of spirituality to guide their actions. For example, Paul said that his willingness to engage in conversations around spirituality "grows out of my own personal life experience." Monica spoke of working with

Christian athletes: "I draw a lot from my own personal experience, in terms of Christianity." Pat

spoke of learning how to work with spirituality by doing: "I mean theory is one thing, but then

you get into the practice…you just learn by being in situations." This idea of learning from

experience was not necessarily understood as a negative by consultants, but rather part of the

process. When speaking of working with cultural issues such as spirituality and religion, Austin

stated:

> I tend to be of the perspective that competence is an ongoing process. Once you finish
>
> your training, that does not mean that you're set for the rest of your career. That's an
>
> ongoing process.

It appears that although spirituality was not always discussed prior to or during one's training, it

was an issue faced by consultants in their practice. Even though the subject may be *taboo*,

consultants suggested that one should be aware of how both athletes and consultants understood

spirituality.

Broad understanding. How consultants understood spirituality for themselves varied.

Scott said that defining spirituality was "not an easy question" while Austin said he "didn't

know." However, as their thoughts and insights continued, when it came to understanding

spirituality within a consulting relationship there was a more coherent response. Paul said that it

can be "defined a lot of different ways" and Joe stated that one should use a "broad definition"

for it. In recognizing that spirituality could have different definitions, Pat gave multiple

possibilities such as, "inner peace with yourself…will power…connection…strength to move

forward…great performance." Consultants suggested that these may or may not be connected to

a religion, that it depended on the individual.

Consultants were also asked how they thought spirituality developed. The most common feedback was that it is a product of one's environment, one that takes into account "socialization factors" (Pat), "life experience" (Joe), and "family" (Scott). A few consultants responded in terms of theoretical models. Howard said, "You could look at spirituality from Piaget, Kohlberg's moral development model. You could look at Deepak Chopra's 'Seven Ways to Know God.' There's some very nice models there." Monica also spoke of spiritual development in terms of stage models:

> I don't know if it's a stage model like other models. I guess that's what I'm struggling with is thinking of spiritual identity and development of spiritual and religious identity as a stage type model, so that once you get to this stage that's it. Because I do think that people can cut off any ties with any religion, any spirituality, and stop believing. I don't know if I see it as stages. I see it as more fluid and much more dynamic than that and I think it ebbs and flows.

Of note was that the few who described spiritual development in terms of models had backgrounds in clinical psychology. However, overall, there was agreement that one must take into consideration the environment in which an athlete is raised when thinking about how it develops in each individual.

Theme 2: Athlete-Driven

Athlete-driven represents the idea that the athlete-consultant relationship is directed by the athletes' needs and their situations. Consultants stated that it is the athletes who initiate the conversation regarding spirituality; this then drives the consultant towards respecting athletes' values. In building a house, although the consultant is there to help, it is the athlete who makes

the final decisions on the details of the house, such as the paint colors and fabrics used. This reflects the background and culture that the athlete brings with him/her. In navigating this relationship, Joe speaks of allowing the athlete to lead in the following way:

> It's about being with the person and it's about where it goes and where their dance takes the relationship…I'm going into wherever that person's at...I value and cherish the experience, and the experience being the work with the person I'm engaged with. That's the dance.

A consultant must respect the athletes by going where they lead the relationship. Two subthemes within *Athlete-driven* that help represent this idea include *respect* and *fabric*.

Respect. Within the conversation of building relationships, whether spirituality is present or not, consultants thought it was of utmost importance to be respectful of the athletes' background and beliefs, and to never impose their own. Pat said, "You just have to be respectful." He spoke of focusing on the athletes' values, faith in this particular instance, in this way:

> You got to know something about the person. You can't impose. You got to draw on the strengths and when things get bad then it's easier to counsel them to come back to their own faith and religion and how to move forward.

It is about using what is meaningful for the athlete and not imposing one's own faith beliefs on him/her. Mitch also reflected on how spirituality should come from the athlete and not be imposed by the consultant, which he thought could be understood based on the context within which one is working:

I would not say that I have spirituality as a lens at all when I initially approach a

consultation. It would have to come out of the client before I take that approach,

especially the Christian form of spirituality. I wouldn't want to be in a situation where I

was imposing that line of beliefs on the client cause it's not in the context. They're not

meeting me at a church where that could work. It's in a separate context.

Expanding upon this idea of when they bring spirituality into the context of the consulting

relationship, Mitch said, "We try and do that in a very respectful and authentic way." Joe

concurred: "I just don't want to be loading my biases onto the person I am working with" and,

"Don't have an agenda."

Fabric. One's background or culture is represented by the subtheme *fabric*. A house is

often decorated and colored to the liking of the owner. Once within the house, one is able to see

the type of décor the athletes have chosen for the home, which is representative of their cultures.

Although a consultant has their own style they prefer, it is about learning why the athletes have

chosen a particular style that will allow the relationships to be more meaningful. Ultimately, it is

also necessary for a consultant to recognize how their own fabric or culture that they bring with

them influences the relationships.

Even prior to entering into sport psychology training, consultants have an identity and

background they bring with them. Natalie reflected on her identity as a person prior to her

graduate education, "I didn't come into my masters and PhD programs as an empty slate. I came

in with a solid background." Monica spoke of her experience of understanding how her different

identities influenced her work. When describing her "personal religious identity", she stated, "I

realized that it's a part of me and I can't really separate that out from any other part of me." This

included her work as a sport psychology consultant. Paul said, "I have a worldview that informs my practice." Part of Paul's belief was that he "valued people" and that "God loves all." For consultants, having their own personal values did not mean that they imposed these on athletes; rather, the way they cared for athletes reflected their own personal beliefs.

Austin also spoke about doing his best to manage his own biases as a practitioner:

You can't ever completely dissociate from your own values and beliefs. I think that's impossible to do, but I think we can do our very best to be mindful of what those are and when and how that could potentially become a barrier within the working relationship. So I think you have to have that self-awareness to know that. That's something I really work to make sure that I continue to do is to make sure, okay, what are my personal thoughts or beliefs about some of the things we're talking about?

Joe described this orientation to consulting as having a sense of purpose:

Just how important a sense of purpose is. I want to hammer that. I just think that's a big part of what I try to do. For me, and my work! For someone else, they have their thing, but knowing yourself and knowing what's your approach and what works for you is huge. And understanding that and understanding the strengths of it and understanding the parts of it that are detrimental of it.

Mitch reflected on how he makes sense of his own spiritual beliefs with his other roles, such as being a professor:

It's in my fabric…Anything that is part of me is going to come out in my teaching, one way or the other, or my supervision. It's going to come out so I need to be aware of that

and how I interact with it…I'm always trying to find the right connection and try to listen

to what does this person need, whether that person be a student or a client.

He also described how he works with either a student or client for whom spirituality is a salient

aspect of identity:

I would certainly feel confident enough if it was relevant for a client or with a supervisee

to discuss that. Let them think about how they would do that. Whether they're going to

work with faith as a part of what they do. How does spirituality affect their consulting?

How's it coming out? Materials they present, is it coloring everything and then how's

that affecting their work? So they do, no matter what, need to be aware and mindful of

those tendencies, but I think you'll have to do that yourself.

Again, these consultants made it a point to let me know that spirituality is part of who they are,

but that they do not approach any sport psychology relationship using spirituality as their

primary lens. Thus, they suggested that consultants should be aware of their own beliefs and

perspectives on spirituality and/or religion and that this self-awareness allowed them to focus on

what the athlete brings into the relationship.

Theme 3: Coping Mechanism

The theme *coping mechanism* emerged from the interviews when consultants described

when athletes appear to use spirituality and the purposes it serves. Coming back to the metaphor

of building a house, spirituality is a portal or door that athletes open up; that portal appeared to

open when athletes were facing a particular crisis. Thus, the relationship entered through the

doorway; consultants reported that athletes integrated psychological skills with spirituality in

order to cope with adversity. As Scott said, "[spirituality] comes up a lot when athletes are

experiencing some form of adversity" to "deal with life, deal with adversity." In essence, consultants reported that spirituality is used most often by athletes as a coping mechanism.

  Adversity. Consultants spoke of adversity in a variety of forms. Some spoke of adversity in the form of relationships, anxiety and/or confidence issues. Monica described how it was used when athletes were suffering from an injury:

> In the process of us working together she became injured, and that's when religion and
>
> spirituality came into play because s/he began to question why God would allow her to be
>
> injured.

Howard spoke of it more broadly, "When you're dealing with death and dying, always! Often if there is a season, a career-ending injury it tends to pull the question of faith in terms of purpose and values." Moving outside of religion, Natalie spoke of spirituality being present for one to learn from one's situation: "If there's a problem, there's a solution. Life lessons always teaching us, it's always telling us. I tell athletes, if you get injured this is a time for reflection." In any case, dealing with an injury meant learning something about oneself. One begins to transcend one's own beliefs about one's circumstances in hopes of finding something within or outside of oneself, such as God, to help rationalize their situation. As Pat stated it, spirituality is an aspect of one's culture that helps one "navigate through the uncertainty of life." In recognizing this part of the athlete, consultants would most often address performance-related concerns such as dealing with injury by integrating spirituality into the consulting relationship.

  Integration. This subtheme represents the process consultants used to include spirituality within performance consulting. *Integration* entailed being open to the values of the athlete and then integrating those values into psychological skills training. Paul spoke of this process as:

I tried to work with them to help them come up with some strategies that were consistent

with their faith that might allow them to achieve the focus and composure that they

wanted under pressure in competition…strategies like self-talk, imagery, to some extent

arousal control, emotional control would be examples.

He went on to say that these strategies "are very generic techniques and they can work for

athletes regardless of other things they might value or believe." In fact, integrating values and

psychological skills was done whether the values were spiritual and/or religious or not. Joe

reflected on working with an athlete who came from a "more traditional religious background"

when he stated:

That's their perspective and that gets worked into their routine and what they're doing,

but that isn't for everyone. And that isn't the right way to do it and the ONLY way to do

it because there's a lot of different traditions in ways to do things.

Joe recognized that this aspect of athletes' lives was important and relevant to those who brought

it up in consultation; however, he stated that religion was not important to every athlete that he

works with. Austin also integrated an athlete's faith with psychological skills: "We've included

that in the goal-setting process for her in terms of her self-talk and the routines she's been putting

together, very much include her faith and spirituality." Overall, the process of *integration* may be

summed up well with a quote from Pat, who said:

The idea of spirituality I think is a very important part of sport to a lot of people. And if

that is their faith and that's part of their religion and that's part of their routines and that's

something they draw inner strength to get ready and to put all their resources into that –

don't mess with it!

Consultants found that using the resources and values the athletes bring with them, in this case related to spirituality, should be honored and incorporated into the working relationship. This was especially true for athletes when they were struggling to cope with the adversity that often comes in sport. In terms of the forms of spirituality experienced by consultants, there was one value-laden belief system that took precedence over any other form.

Theme 4: Christianity as Norm

When building a house, one aspect not discussed thus far has been the neighborhood in which the house is built. The neighborhood represents the culture within which the relationship is being built and this influences the values athletes may or may not bring to the consulting session. For the consultants interviewed, there was one form of spirituality that was encountered more than any other - Christianity. When asked about their experiences of spirituality within consultation, consultants more often than not talked about working with athletes who identify as Christian.

Christian athletes. *Christian athletes* represented the majority of those athletes who reported using spirituality or religion in their sport experience. This included those from a variety of Christian traditions (i.e., Protestant, Baptist, Catholic, etc.) as well as a variety of spiritual practices (i.e., prayer, Bible, music). Six of nine consultants gave examples of working with an athlete who identified Christianity as a salient aspect of their identity. Consultants identified these athletes as being "very religious" (Pat), "devout Christian" (Howard), "Protestant" (Mitch,), and/or "conservative Christian" (Paul). Also, in getting to know these athletes, consultants discovered many aspects of these athletes' lives that demonstrated their involvement

with their religion. Pat spoke of an athlete being "actively involved in Athletes-in-Action, Bible studying groups." Monica discussed an athlete who reconnected with her Christian beliefs:

> She started back going to church. She started back listening to her music. At some points we even used certain scriptures as affirmations during her rehab process. She even connected with a group of teammates and other athletes within the department and created a Bible study group.

Other consultants gave similar examples of various Christian practices.

A few consultants described their geographic location within the United States as potentially being a reason for their increased encounters with Christianity. As Mitch described: "At least in [state], we've got your Baptists, a lot of other Protestants" and "we get a lot of more traditional religious clients that have their spirituality through a brand of religion." He suggested that in different parts of the country, athletes might experience different forms of religion. Paul had similar sentiments: "I don't remember such conversations with any athletes of other faith traditions. It was always with conservative Christians. I think that's probably not surprising in [geographic location] where I'm located in the U.S."

Western Culture. Consultants were also aware of the fact that because they lived in the United States there was a Western influence that includes spiritual norms such as Christianity. Howard pointed this out when he stated that he worked with people who align with "Eastern philosophy," which was different a Western philosophy. Natalie said, "I make a lot of Biblical references because that's what people know." She even used Biblical examples within the interview to explain concepts like spirituality and faith to me.

The influence of *Western Culture* was even recognized by some of the consultants who spoke of the term "spirituality" as coming from a Western perspective. When asked about spirituality, Natalie said, "It's a word that we use;" "Spirituality is a word that Westerners use. I really don't even know what it means." Joe also suggested that he wasn't sure what being "spiritual" or a "spiritual person" meant:

> I went through a phase where everyone came up to me and said, you're so spiritual. And I go, I don't understand. I couldn't get it. I didn't, but then in looking at it, I don't view it as spiritual, but I think that's the terminology.

Both of these consultants recognized spirituality as a term used within Western culture.

Oppression. Where Christianity is the norm, other forms of spirituality and/or religion may be thought of as marginalized or even purposefully excluded. The subtheme *oppression* was not found in the majority of the interviews; however, it was a significant experience a few consultants mentioned and was worth noting. One consultant spoke of working with teams where there was a Christian influence, which is not the form of spirituality to which the consultant ascribes. As Pat described his experience:

> I've traveled with teams. I'm [Personal religious orientation]. Not that we're a minority, but when you're in the locker room before the game they're saying religious prayers, it's always kind of an uncomfortable thing.

This also included going to various banquets at the end of the season where spirituality was included by the team:

I've been to enough banquets over [number of years] that when they end the banquet or when they start their prayer, 'in the name of Jesus Christ,' [religious orientation] will squirm in their seats when they hear that.

These were examples from Pat's consulting experiences, but he also spoke about this on a more personal level. While reflecting on his own personal encounters of being within a Christian athletic environment, Pat also spoke of an encounter where his child, who has the same religious orientation as Pat, went to a sport camp where Christianity was emphasized:

There was one in [state] that immediately, the first night, they were saying prayers and talking about Jesus and my [child] felt very, very, very uncomfortable at that camp. And in a way it was very disrespectful that there was no literature or preparation that as parents, we can help him before he gets there, deal with it before [child] gets blindsided as a teenager.

Thus, these experiences not only demonstrate how one perspective on religion or spirituality becomes normative - Christian spirituality – but how this impacted consultants who do not ascribe to that religious tradition.

In the next chapter, I discuss the major findings as they relate to the literature. I also discuss how this information might be implied in both practical settings and research. Limitations are also presented.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion, Conclusions, and Future Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to gain insight into how sport psychology consultants'
understand spirituality for themselves and how this enters into their performance enhancement
relationships. Thus, the guiding research questions were the following: (a) how do experienced
CC-AASPs understand and define spirituality and faith? and (b) in what ways does spirituality
enter into their sport psychology consulting relationships? In this chapter, I discuss the major
findings, connections to previous research, practical implications, future directions, and
limitations.

Major Findings

The metaphor of *The Consulting Relationship as Building a House* was useful in
thinking about consultants' experience with spirituality in sport psychology consultation. More
specifically, this represented a gateway or view into an athlete's spirituality. The first theme of
Portal represented the doors and windows of the house, or how consultants described gaining
access to the ways that athletes understand spirituality and faith.

Portal included three subthemes – *language, taboo,* and *broad understanding*.
Spirituality was often presented in the atheltes' vocabulary or *language* that allowed consultants
insight into athletes' worldviews. *Taboo* reflected how consultants viewed this door and
encountered little, if any, training in entering through the doorway of spirituality. Because this
Portal can be represented a plethora of ways, consultants found it important to be open to a
broad understanding of how athletes understand spirituality for themselves. Thus, *Portal*

offered insight into how an athlete uses spirituality and consultants' perspective of those gateways.

The theme *Athlete-driven* represented who is leading the building process, especially in the creation of those entrances and spaces of spirituality. The first subtheme – *respect* – demonstrated the consultants' interaction with the athletes' use of spirituality within the home. Although consultants have their own view of how they personally would build a home, they would never impose that on the athlete. Thus the athlete decorates the home with various *fabric* and color. This second subtheme was reflective of values and beliefs. Again, the athlete chooses how to decorate despite consultants' awareness of their own style or belief system. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the consultant to recognize how one should handle such beliefs when building a relationship with an athlete. *Athlete-driven* is an approach consultants' had in order to allow the athletes' feel comfortable in their desire to bring in spirituality.

Coping mechanism is how spirituality is used by the atheltes. The subtheme *adversity* was reflective of when spirituality was included and when that *Portal* was entered. Once entering into this space, the resources and values found within that room are integrated into psychological skills training. Being aware of the *fabric* chosen by the athlete allows consultants to use these values as a means of coping with adversity. When and how spirituality enters a consulting is imperative.

Christianity as Norm emerged as the fourth theme. This reflects they neighborhood or culture in which relationships are built. The examples given from the consultants primarily focused on *Christian-athletes*, which is reflective of the *Western culture*. Thus, the house looks similar to the rest of the houses in the neighborhood. However, if someone does not agree with

this type of house then one may feel *oppressed* by that culture, as they are outside of the norm. If one is working within a particular culture, one may likely encounter a similar form of spirituality, namely Christianity.

Connections to and Extensions of Previous Research

Guiding Research Question #1: How Do Experienced CC-AASPs Understand and Define Spirituality and Faith?

Results suggested that consultants understood spirituality in a variety of ways. This mirrors previous – although sparse – research in sport psychology. For example, some consultants defined spirituality as a sense of purpose (Ravizza, 2002) while others defined it as the experience of a great performance (Watson & Nesti, 2005). Results also suggest that consultants' personal definitions of spirituality reflect the three components of Robinson's (2007) model of spirituality: (a) there was a sense of a connection to something or someone greater than oneself; and (b) it involved another, which is salient to the notion of this phenomenon being relational. Spirituality is also something that involves some form of spiritual practices such as prayer/meditation, reading sacred texts, and community. Addressing the third and final component, spirituality was an aspect that added meaning and value to an individual's life. Consultants also spoke of their own life experiences and the various moments in life that had a significant impact on the way they found meaning and purpose. Both the definitions given by the consultants in this study as well as in sport psychology literature recognize that spirituality is not limited to religion.

All consultants in this study acknowledged that within a performance consulting context, and for the good of their clients, one should maintain a broad definition of spirituality. This is in

agreement with Koenig's (2008) recommendation for practitioners within the medical field. This was still understood despite the experiences that consultants most often described spirituality within the performance relationship as "Christian" religious spirituality.

Consultants' definitions of "faith" were also consistent with previous literature. For example, consultants described the term "faith" with two types of responses: One was that it was a religious term. The second was that it is trust or belief. Dykstra (2005) spoke of faith as being placed into one of two paradigms that was similar to the consultants' distinctions. For those that described it as a religious term, this connoted a connection with the divine. Others simply described it as trusting or believing in someone or something, a more general human phenomenon. Therefore, these consultants suggested that everyone experiences faith; however, it is the object of this faith that differs.

In describing how faith and spirituality develop in a person, researchers lean heavily on the term "faith" versus "spiritual". In the current study, faith was often used synonymously with spirituality, seeing this phenomenology in a broad sense (Fowler, 1981). Overall, consultants described spiritual development as a result of the environment that one was raised in and the culture in which one lived. Cultural sport psychology researchers (e.g., Schinke & Hanrahan, 2009) have encouraged consultants to become aware of athletes' cultures and how consultants' own culture impacts an athletes' values and worldviews. This research may provide one useful approach to further our understanding of how to build a strong foundation with an athlete by getting to know him/her and what s/he values as a person (Fisher et al., 2009).

Two consultants specifically described the process of spiritual development through potential theoretical models. One mentioned the use of stage models for spirituality, as can be

seen in the work of Piaget or Kohlberg. This dovetails with the work of Fowler (1981) whose primary model of faith development includes both of these theoretical models. The other consultant saw spirituality from the theoretical lens of "ebbing and flowing" and as something that does not have an "end point." This is in line with arguments made within faith development literature regarding the problem of postmodernism, emphasizing that there is no one universal human religious or spiritual orientation (McDargh, 2001). Such beliefs about spiritual and faith development ultimately are a reflection of one's epistemic orientation (Fowler & Dell, 2006). Dykstra (1986) has encouraged individuals who work with others to decide for themselves how they understand faith and its development. The questions posed to consultants in the present study provided an opportunity for consultants to potentially undergo such a process for themselves. Fowler (1986) suggested that discussing one's faith might be therapeutic. Consultants expressed this was the case on multiple occasians.

Guiding Research Question #2: In What Ways Does Spirituality Enter Into Their Sport Psychology Consulting Relationships?

Results from this study also demonstrated that spirituality often entered into a consulting relationship when athletes revealed using it as a coping mechanism in the face of adversity. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) define coping as "a process of constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands or conflicts appraised as taxing or exceeding one's resources" (p. 141). Consultants reported that athletes often used their religion as a resource in difficult times. Therefore, sport psychology practicitioners may consider religion a meaningful tool when working with athletes (Balague, 1999). In addition, Coakley (2010) suggests religion can be used in sport to "cope with uncertainty" (p. 535). This is

consistent with consultants' descriptions of when athletes used religion to work through injuries, an experience certainly provides many unknowns.

Stevenson (1997) found that Christian athletes who have "fallen-away" from their faith often come back to Christianity when facing a crisis in order to cope with their sporting experience. In this study, consultants reported that "in crisis" athletes often used religious scripture, song, and prayer. These spiritual practices are used by athletes to reconnect with their values and find meaning again within sport. This finding is supported by literature suggesting that Christian prayer is a common method Christian athletes engage in to cope (Czech & Bullett, 2007; Czech et al., 2004; Park, 2000; Watson & Czech, 2005). While Christianity was not the focus of this study, both the athlete examples given by consultants as well as their own religious tradition was reported as predominantly Christian. However, although Christianity was the most encountered experience for consultants, this did not represent all consultants' personal viewpoints. This study similar to other studies within the sport psychology literature (Bennet et al., 2005; Czech et al., 2004; Egli et al., in review; Stevenson, 1997, 1991) demonstrated a focus on Christianity. In addition, all of the consultants work within Western culture where Christianity is considered the dominant narrative (Blodgett et al., 2009). Therefore, this may explain its prevalence.

Consultants demonstrated what sport psychology researchers would consider as cultural competence, as they were able to consult and interact with athletes from various spiritual traditions regardless of whether it was the same as their own (Kontos & Breland-Noble, 2002). Mio, Barker-Hackett, and Tumambing (2006) stated that for individuals to move towards becoming culturally competent they should become aware of their own biases, gain knowledge

of other cultures, and then develop culturally appropriate strategies. Awareness of one's biases was recognized as consultants discussed their own *fabric*, specifically in relation to their spiritual/religious orientation. Consultants demonstrated becoming knowledgeable through the awareness of an athlete's interior language as well as seeking to understand the particular spirituality of athletes they encounter. Although they may not have learned specific skills to address spirituality, many found that it was through experience and exposure that they learned the appropriate skills to work with athletes' spirituality effectively. Lastly, the most effective strategy they found was to help athletes integrate their own values into their routines and mental skills practice.

Despite potential positive outcomes of integrating Christianity and sport for the athletes that these consultants work with, some scholars would challenge such actions. They argue that the dominant culture of sport does not always mesh well with the Christian ethic (Higgs, 1995; Higgs & Braswell, 2004; Hoffman, 1992a, 2010). One goal often desired by athletes is to become more competitive and consistent within their sport, which ultimately leads to the defeat of another and promotion of the self (Hoffman, 1992b). Thus, some within the Christian community may see the use of spiritual practices for performance purposes as going against their values, and this may cause a greater dilemma. As Stevenson (1991) noted, for a Christian athlete who is fully committed to his/her spiritual identity first, a focus on winning at the expense of another may cause the athlete to leave his/her sport. From a holistic standpoint, this may be beneficial for the athlete. Another avenue consultants mentioned useful was athletes' involvement in various parachurch organizations such as Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) and Athletes in Action (AIA). Again, this may prove beneficial for those athletes involved;

however, these organizations were founded on muscular Christian values such promoting their religion and seeing sport as a platform (Hoffman, 2010). In relation to other athletes or consultants who do not ascribe to Christianity, involvement in such organizations could lead to proselytizing which may be seen as a form of oppression of those who do not agree with the athlete's values.

Another use of religion in sport may be to reaffirm expectations within a group or team (Coakley, 2010). One particular experience by a consultant spoke about was being part of a team where prayer was involved in various team settings. This was done without the consideration of whether or not all members within that setting, including the sport psychology consultant, agreed with this particular belief system. Although consultants may be comfortable working outside their own personal framework, it may not always be the case for other athletes. Hoffman (2010) noted that Christian prayer within sport might not always be sensitive to "religiously pluralistic audiences" (p. 242). Therefore, those outside of Christianity may experience oppression through the use of prayer before, during or after games. According to Fisher et al. (2003), this may be an issue of power and privilege, as Christianity may hold a higher status within this culture.

Despite purposefully using the term spirituality to gain participation, of those who were familiar with the study there were few certified consultants who acknowledged experiencing spirituality within a consulting relationship. Although sport psychology literature defines spirituality in a broad sense (Watson & Nesti, 2005), one might assume that the majority of consultants who saw the term spirituality understood it as religious and therefore did not participate in the study. This reflects the notion of spirituality as being a "taboo" subject. Although not part of the actual results, the researcher encountered many e-mails and in-person

conversations regarding interest in the topic. Some were simply interested in my potential results, while others were encouraged this topic was being researched by someone in the field. Through these informal conversations the researcher was given the impression that there is a desire, albeit from the limited sample to whom he spoke, for spirituality to be part of the conversation with sport psychology.

Results also demonstrate that spirituality can be a central component to one's practice. Although the consultants who did so in this study defined spirituality in a non-religious way, there is a possibility for consultants to work from a religious paradigm. However, one must consider the context in which one finds oneself. For example, consultants spoke of potentially working within a religious culture (i.e., Liberty University) where certain values are expected where this may be appropriate and even encouraged, yet this has not been explored. Both fields of psychology and counseling offer specific spiritual approaches to their work; sport psychology may benefit from doing the same.

Practical Implications

Findings from the study entail several practical implications. Consultants encountered spirituality within performance consulting relationships. One way in which they were able to connect with the athletes is through the use of the language related to athlete values. This allowed consultants to better engage the athlete and develop rapport.

Graduate training programs in sport psychology could begin to engage students in conversations about spirituality, faith, and religion. This could include learning about various faith groups, strategies for working with specific spiritual and/or religious orientations, as well as reflecting on one's own beliefs concerning spirituality and how they impact the consulting

relationship. One may also be exposed to various frameworks presented within cultural sport psychology and faith development theory that might be useful when developing one's consulting philosophy. Thus, helping those within the field to become more comfortable with spirituality and lessening the stigma of it being "taboo" might be beneficial. These actions may also help provide more movement towards becoming a more culturally competent and ethical consultant. The Association of Applied Sport Psychology (AASP) could also include more cultural sport psychology programming that address specific cultural aspects such as spirituality at national and regional conferences (Fisher & Roper, in review).

Applied consultants who are seeking to become more holistic in their approach may begin to include questions of spirituality in their intake interview. In doing so, it is best to hold a broad understanding and recognize that athletes' spirituality may or may not include religion. Also, if one works within a particular geographic area where one form of spirituality or religion is privileged within the community, it may be beneficial to learn more about that culture and also be aware of those who do not "fit" within that culture.

In addition, according to faith development literature, if a consultant is thinking about integrating spirituality with psychological skills training, in addition to specific training s/he should consider the maturity level of the athlete's faith. Consultants in the current study stated that they usually encountered Christian athletes who only spoke of their faith briefly. This may mean that consultants may also encounter those athletes whose have fully integrated their spirituality within their sport experience. Stevenson (1991) suggested that one needs to first recognize where [the athlete] places him/herself on a spiritual continuum before one can truly understand how to integrate it in one's work with that person.

Future Directions

This study offers insight into how certified consultants understand and approach spirituality within a performance consulting relationship. Again, similar to many of the studies with sport psychology that include spirituality and/or religion, the focus was reported as related to being Christian. Therefore, it would be beneficial to see how athletes and coaches who ascribe to spirituality, faith, and religions other than Christianity experience sport. This could include an examination of other potential coping strategies and experiences that consultants who have worked with these athletes and coaches can report. Along the lines of religion, another term that might benefit being discussed would be religiosity.

There is also much more room to expand upon consultants' and athletes' knowledge of Christianity and its impact on performance for those who are interested. One such avenue would be to pursue what qualities a Christian athlete would desire in a sport psychology consultant. Prayer has been found as the most common form of coping for Christian athletes; however, future studies might seek to systematically measure the effectiveness of prayer on performance and other factors such as anxiety and injury rehabilitation.

Future researchers may also examine if there are any differences between clinical and educational sport psychology consultants in their approach to spirituality. Another demographic to explore is female as well as non-Caucasian consultant experiences. This sample also included Caucasian, male consultants as the primary participants so one should seek to understand a more diverse sample in terms of race. Although the experience of spirituality within performance consulting has been discussed from the perspective of the consultant, there is also no research

that provides the athletes' experience of integrating spirituality into their own sport performance or within the athlete-coach relationship.

Limitations

The findings of this study are important; however, there were limitations. Consultants within this study were limited to those who attended the 2012 National AASP Conference. Therefore, consultants who have experienced spirituality in consultation but did not attend the conference could also be included in future studies. In addition, due to the time demands of the conference, not all certified consultants who had experienced spirituality within this relationship could make time to participate.

Participants also worked within a Western culure, specifically the United States. This study also only included certified consultants so the experiences of graduate students and others in training were not taken into consideration. Consultants who may have experienced spirituality in consultation but were not certified for five years were also excluded at the beginning of the study.

Conclusions

Despite spirituality being an overlooked component of sport psychology consulting culture, results from this study emphasize that spirituality is an aspect of culture that sport psychology consultants encounter within performance consulting relationships. Being athlete-centered, paying attention to language, and being aware of one's own understanding of spirituality each play a vital role in how the athlete responds to a consultant and/or may integrate his/her spirituality into that relationship. It appears that taking a broad understanding of spirituality into a consulting relationship would allow for more acceptance of the individuality of

its manifestation. Thus, when an athlete faces adversity in sport, spirituality is a potential vehicle that can be used as a resource for coping purposes. This was primarily demonstrated through experiences with Christian athletes within this study.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

E-mail sent out

Email Title: Encountering Spirituality in Sport Psychology Consulting

Dear List/Name of Individual –

My name is Trevor Egli, a doctoral student at the University of Tennessee. I am interested in spirituality and sport psychology consulting, and I am currently in the process of collecting data for my dissertation research on this topic. This year's 2012 AASP conference in Atlanta, GA is coming up and for those of you who may be going to the conference, meet the criteria I am looking for, and would be willing to share your experiences with me, please contact me off list at tegli@utk.edu.

The participants I am hoping to speak with should have the following criteria:
- AASP-CC for a minimum of 5 years
- Have encountered spirituality within a performance consulting relationship

Even if you are not attending this year's conference - and you have encountered spirituality during your consulting sessions – I would be interested in speaking with you. Again, please respond off list.

Thank you for your time and I hope you have great day!

Sincerely,

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Appendix B
Informed Consent Statement

Project Title: Association for Applied Sport Psychology (AASP) – Certified Consultants' Experience of Spirituality within Sport Psychology Consultation

Investigators: Trevor Egli, M.S., Doctoral candidate and Leslee A. Fisher, Ph.D.

What is the purpose of this research study?
You are invited to participate in an interview focusing on how certified consultants through the Association for Applied Sport Psychology (AASP-CCs) have experienced spirituality within their sport psychology consulting relationships. *This study has been approved by the institutional review board of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.*

How many people will take part in this study?
It is anticipated that 8-12 AASP-CCs who have been certified for at least five years and have encountered spirituality within a consulting relationship will participate in the study.

How long will your part in this study last?
In-person interviews should last between 30-60 minutes. If at any time you wish to remove yourself from the study, you may leave with no negative consequences.

What will happen if you take part in the study?
At a time and location convenient to you, you will be interviewed and asked how you understand spirituality, how it has entered into your consulting relationships, and how you have addressed such issues. **The audio of the interview will be recorded.** You will receive no monetary compensation for this study. You may review the transcript of your interview and tell us to make any changes to it to better reflect your experience.

What are the possible risks from being in this study?
There are no known physical risks to participating in this study. During the interview you may talk about events that were distressing to you in the past. If at any time you feel you should speak to a mental health professional, the researcher, Trevor Egli, will help you find a local Counseling center number and address,if needed.

What are the possible benefits from being in this study?
It is hoped that this experience will provide you with an increased self-awareness of your own conceptualization of spirituality and how this may enter your consulting relationships. Other sport psychology consultants, researchers, professors, athletes, coaches, and those who may encounter spirituality within sport psychology consulting may also benefit from this study.

Initials_____

<u>How will your privacy be protected?</u>
The researcher will exercise every possible effort to ensure that your privacy is protected. The information in the study records will be kept confidential. Your name or any reference that could link you to the study will not be used in any oral or written reports of the results. Additionally, all of the interview recordings will be destroyed once they are transcribed. The informed consent forms will be stored in a secure location, and the recorded interviews will only be accessible to the investigators. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed your data will be destroyed.

<u>Contact Information</u>
If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures (or you experience adverse effects as a result of participating in this study), you may contact the researcher Trevor Egli, 144 HPER Building, UTK, 865-974-8768 or Dr Leslee Fisher, 336 HPER Building, UTK, 865-974-9973. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, contact the Office of Research Compliance Officer at (865) 974-3466.

<u>Participant's Agreement:</u>
I have read all of the information provided above, and I have asked any questions that I may have at this time. I voluntarily agree to participate in this research study, and I am aware that I may withdraw at any time without penalty and without loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled. I have received a copy of this form

_____   _____

Signature of Participant   Date

_____   _____

Investigator Signature   Date

Appendix C
Demographics and Interview Guide

Background Information Questions

Nationality _____   Primary Job Title_____
Race _____   Secondary Job Title (if applicable)_____
Gender _____   Highest Educational Degree_____
Age_____   Years certified as CC-AASP_____
Ethnicity_____   Years practicing sport psychology consultation_____
Primary focus area: Sport Science or Clinical Psych? _____
Other certifications_____
Religious affiliation (if applicable)_____

Questions

1. Tell me about an experience where spirituality has entered into one of your sport psychology

   consulting relationships or sessions.

   o   What was the client like?

   o   What was his/her cultural background?

   o   Could you discuss what the issue was?

   o   How did it come up?

   o   What was this experience like for you?

   o   Tell me some challenges your faced in this situation?

   o   Could you talk about any systematic strategies that you employed (or not)?

   o   If you did employ any strategies, what strategies did you find most helpful when working

       with issues of spirituality within performance consulting? Harmful?

   o   How (if at all) has your training and education in sport psychology shaped how you

       handled this situation as well as spirituality in general in your performance consulting?

   o   Do you believe you could have done anything differently related to this situation? Been

       more prepared to handle issues of spirituality within performance consulting? Why/why

       not?

2. How do you define spirituality?

3. How do you understand or explain faith?

   o Do you think spirituality differs from faith? If so, how?

   o How do you think spirituality develops in a person? How do you think faith develops?

   (e.g., do you think they each develop over time? Under what conditions?)

4. How would you describe your self as a spiritual person, if at all? As a faithful person (if

   appropriate)

   o How has this manifested in your life? (e.g., what has this looked like in your own life)?

5. Are there times when your spiritual beliefs and/or your faith beliefs conflict with your identity as

   a sporty psychology consultant?

   o If so, how do you resolve these conflicts?

6. Is there anything else you think we need to discuss related to spirituality or faith in sport

   psychology consulting?

(adapted from Fisher's (1993) Social Self-Identity interview guide)

Appendix D

ANALYTIC MEMO – NATALIE: 1st READ – POTENTIAL THEMES

Reading this interview was much easier after the interview took place. Plus, I can now see more themes with the other interviews after having some time to process everything. This is another consultant who includes spirituality as part of everything she does; however, she defines spirituality as one's truths. These are bigger than ourselves. Spirituality and faith are terms "used by Westerners." Despite this understanding, she uses Christian language to relate to others because that is what others know. For her, RELATIONSHIP is integral in her work and in building trust. Overall, it is about preparation and opportunity, which is done in a positive perspective. Everything happens for a reason. When talking about spirituality, she says that her training did not help in that case, but there were certain universal qualities people had that helped to enhance those values. Otherwise, spirituality is a taboo subject. She seems to be very respectful of the athletes with whom she works and is nonjudgemental.

Appendix E

Confidentiality Statement: Research Group

As a member of the Thematizing Group, by signing below, I agree to keep any information discussed regarding interview transcripts from the study *Association for Applied Sport Psychology (AASP) – Certified Consultants' Experience of Spirituality within Sport Psychology Consultation* by Trevor J. Egli, confidential.

Name: _____   Date: _____

Name: _____   Date: _____

Name: _____   Date: _____

Name: _____   Date: _____

Name: _____   Date: _____

Name: _____   Date: _____

VITA

Trevor J. Egli was born on April 16, 1985 in Lewisburg, PA. Prior to attending the University of Tennessee, he completed a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology at Franklin & Marshall College (Lancaster, PA) and a Master of Science degree in Kinesiology with a specialization in Sport Psychology at Georgia Southern University (Statesboro, GA). In May 2013 he received his Doctor of Philosophy degree in Kinesiology and Sport Studies with a specialization in Sport Psychology and Motor Behavior.